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What we're playing: Colin McRae Rally,

European Air War beta, Johnny

Herbert's Grand Prix, TOCA,

Motocross Madness, Sin, Starcraft

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Everyone's a winner. Especially us.



It's a bit like the 'Logies', except it's about games. Yes, it's Game Of The Year time again. Those precious two months in the gaming calendar year where the blood sweat and tears of thousands of game developers are either destroyed or rewarded by PC

PowerPlay readers.

Wield you mighty power, gamers. Speak and be heard! Because GOTY is reader's choice it's the real deal. Sure, we at PowerPlay are all-knowing and there has never been a single more potent concentration of taste, style and judgement than that found at PCPP HQ, but where there are a mere dozen of us, there are tens of thousands of you. We're expecting to see a few 'big' games take a hammering and hope to see some recognition paid to games which didn't quite get the full spotlight.

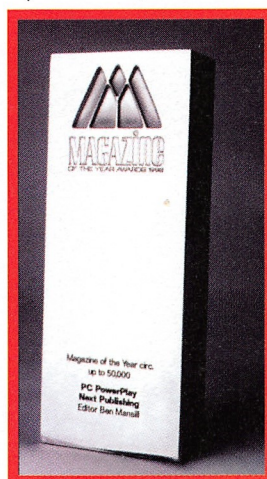
It's like the 'Logies', except it's about magazines. And we won. On a rainy night in August the PCPP crew donned the finest tuxedos they could borrow and fronted up at Sydney's Star City Casino. Expecting nothing more than a free feed and an all-night game of spot-the-drunk-celebrity, we were slightly amazed when they said "PC PowerPlay" just after "and the winner is...". Wow, eh? The Gold Logie of magazines and we won the bastard! Ha! We're not trying to make a commercially formula mag, just

something gamers and tech-fans would want. We hey! Rest assured readers, we won't let it go to our heads - mainly because our brains are still completely fogged-over after our celebrations.

OK, so we're fabulous. Is there anything important actually happening in Gamesland? It's been an average month for games, but some very exciting new video cards are coming to the market. We've got a preliminary test of the new RIVA TNT, look to page 27 for that.

The only other product that's really impressed me is Creative's Blaster PC. About time! Gamers have always run with custom-built PCs, usually purchased from slightly suspicious back-alley shops that probably won't be in business when you front-up for your first warranty claim. Alternatively, there's the 'off-the-shelf' systems from big name makers. Expensive and not so great for games, but you know there will be solid gold service when you need it. Now Creative (a brand known and respected by all gamers) have brought us the best of both worlds. This fully customizable multimedia beast is designed purely for games, which is all that's really

important in this world. Nice one Creative. Now, let's see some other PC manufacturers come up with some gear that we can actually respect.



Ben Mansill
Editor

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Like a game manual, except much smaller.

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Have the Magazine of the Year home delivered. What style! Plus, be in the running to win a sensational Philips 21" monitor.

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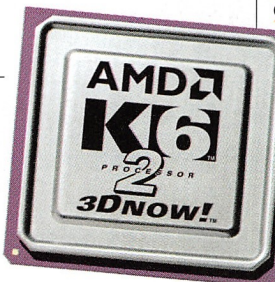
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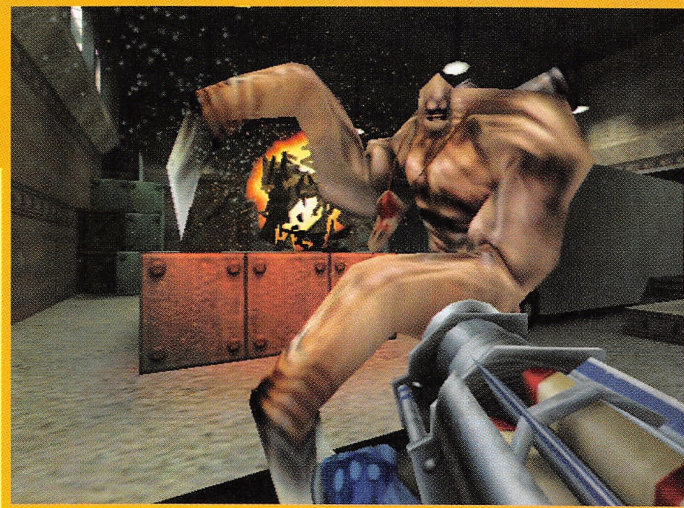


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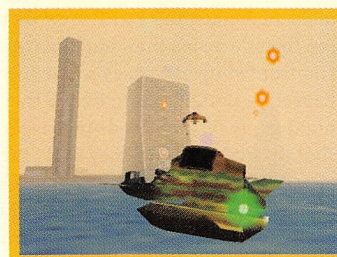
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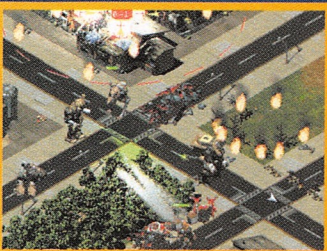
GAMEPLAY

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We take this stunner apart, then put it all back together again for you. Fight with confidence!

Playguide: Unreal 100

Yes. The Big One. Our final instalment of the Unreal Guide is the biggest and the best around.



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HE WHO CONTROLS THE SPICE,



LEAD THE NOBLE EITRIEDES,
THE RUTHLESS HARKONNEN OR
THE INSIDIOUS ORDOS



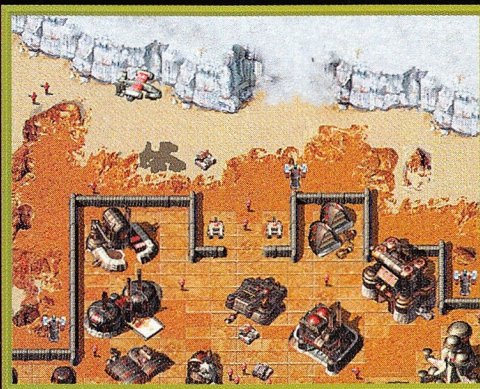
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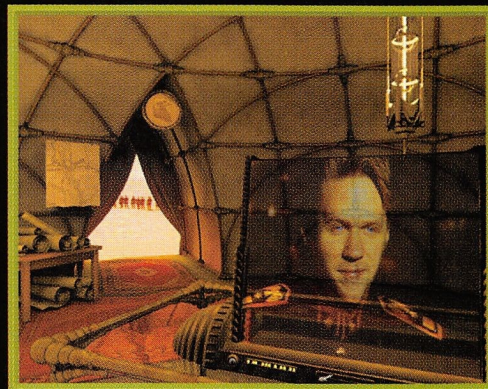
GIANT SANDWORMS IN NEW HIGH
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DANGER OF SPICE MINING



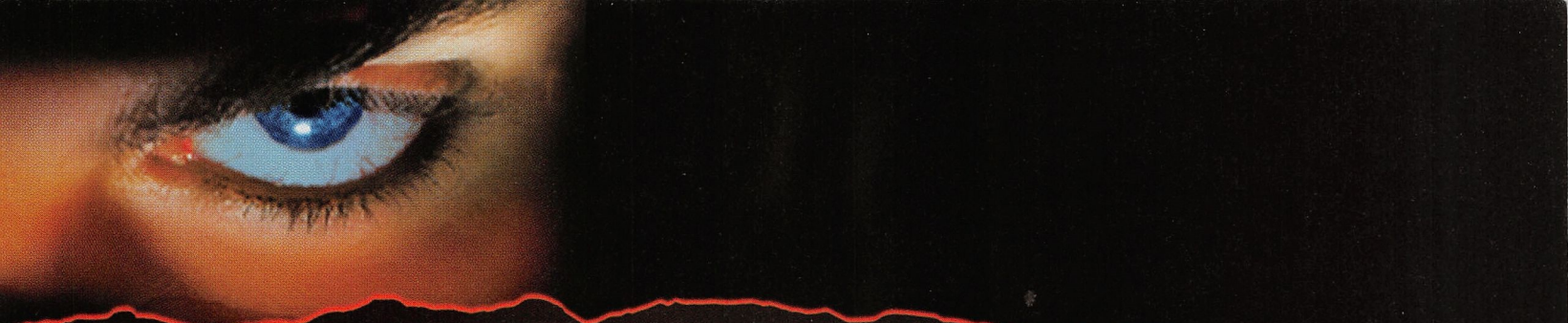
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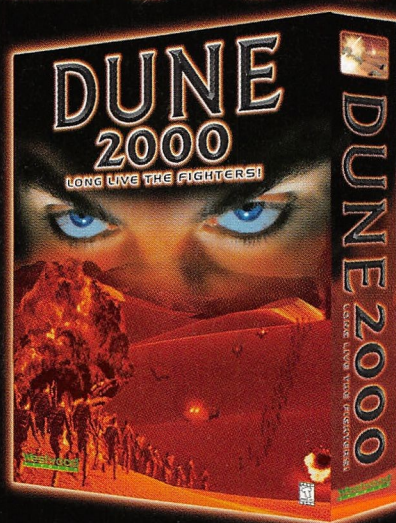
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CD GUIDE

Your entertainment for the month. Game hard.

Important Notice regarding the August (#27) CD.

There are reports of the 'Marburg' virus being present in two files on the PowerPlay CD #27.

M.A.X. 2 demo

Location on CD:

`\games\Max2\Max2beta.exe`

Star Trek Vulcan Fury

Location on CD:

`\Games\Startrek\Furydemo.exe`

These are self-extracting archives for the two demos M.A.X. 2 and Star Trek: Vulcan Fury. Do not use these files. You may run all other demos on that CD with confidence.

The 'Marburg' virus will not be detected by most standard virus scanners.

WHAT THE VIRUS DOES

Below is a quote from VET antivirus software regarding Marburg:

Marburg infected Windows 95/98/NT PE format, executable files (Including Screen-saver files). It is highly polymorphic, but causes no damage. It deletes some integrity checker databases, and we believe this ability was

designed to help the virus avoid detection by some common Anti-Virus products. It will not infect files that have a "V" in the name, to avoid infecting Anti-Virus products.

Once your PC is infected the virus will remain dormant for three months. If an infected file (an .EXE or screen saver) is run in the same hour that the infection occurred after the three month incubation, it will display error messages at random locations around your screen. The virus contains no intentional war-heads and has no known conflicts with non-standard configurations.

REMOVING THE VIRUS

We have included a number of virus scanners and cleaners on this month's cover CD. We recommend that you use AntiViral Toolkit Pro (AVP) for detection and removal of the Marburg Virus.

To ensure this solution worked satisfactorily, we deliberately infected several PCs with the Marburg virus, then cleaned the PCs using both VET 9.82 and AVP. No damage was caused to any of the PCs during this testing, or afterwards, as a result of the virus being present on the systems.

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

As part of our Quality Control process we routinely scan the CD during compilation, and at final Gold Master stage with several current scanners, among them, the popular and usually reliable scanners McAfee's Virus Scan and Norton Anti-Virus. Neither of these, or the others we use, detected Marburg. Naturally, we will be incorporating VET and AVP into our testing procedure in future.

Unfortunately, PC PowerPlay wasn't the only magazine with a cover CD infected by Marburg. We understand that several overseas mags have also been recently infected. In addition, the recent Electronic Arts game Wargames also has the Marburg virus. The virus in Wargames is activated by using the electronic registration.

We take the situation extremely seriously, and to that end we are taking all steps to ensure that PC PowerPlay readers can continue to use the cover CDs with confidence.

Ben Mansill
Editor, PC PowerPlay

CD #28

Starting the PC PowerPlay CD

Welcome to the latest PC PowerPlay CD Interface. Insert the CD into the CDROM drive and click on the RUNME file to start. The menu is easy to use. Simply click on the option you want, whether it's Games, Utilities or Patches and another menu will appear. Browse through the menu options and click on the program you want to install. It's pretty straightforward so you shouldn't have any problems.



cdtech@powerplay.next.com.au

Faulty CDs will be replaced free of charge. Send it, together with a description of the error, to:

PC PowerPlay CD Returns

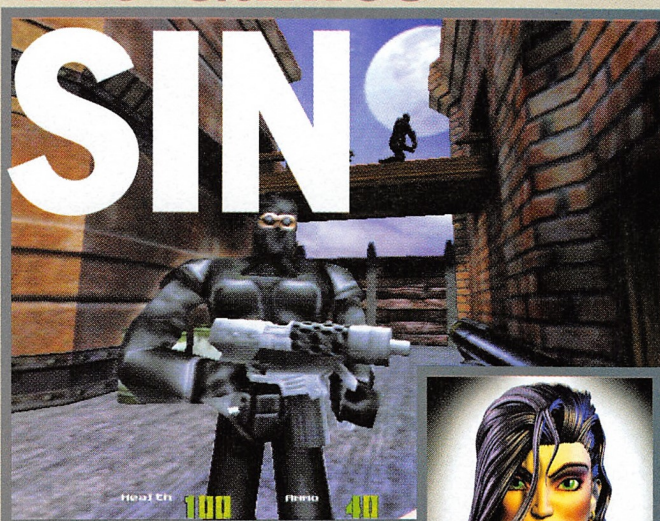
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The Games



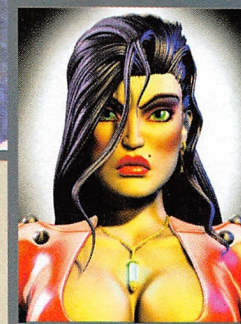
Publisher: Activision

Category : 3D Action

Path: \GAMES\SIN\SIN_DEMO.EXE

The sexy CEO of SinTek Industries plans to overtake the world with her army of genetically-engineered mutants. You are Colonel John R. Blade, a tough guy who's not going to sit back and let that happen. Instead you going to make them all pay for her sins. This demo contains 2 single player, and 2 deathmatch levels for your enjoyment.

Requirements: P120 CPU, Sound Card, Win95, 16 MB RAM



BATTLEZONE

Publisher: Activision

Category : Strategy

Path: \GAMES\BZ\BZDEMO.EXE

In the late 1950's, a meteor shower fell to Earth. In the debris, US and Soviet scientists both discovered an off-world bio-metal that they could fabricate into amazing vehicles and weapons. You must lead your troops across the galaxy on a mission to control the alien technology before the Soviets do. Only one super-power can survive the Battlezone.

Requirements: P133, 16 MB RAM, SVGA, mouse, soundcard, Win95/98, Direct 3D card optional



CASTROL HONDA SUPERBIKES

Publisher: Interactive

Entertainment

Category : Motorbike Simulation

Path: GAMES\HONDA\SETUP.EXE

Officially licensed and developed with the 1997 World Champions, Castrol Honda Superbikes is a blistering motorcycle racing simulation. You get to race the HP Honda RVF-RC45. To win the championship you will have to master the bike and its setup for every track.

Keys: Control is via joystick only

Requirements: P120 CPU, Sound Card, Win95/98, 16 MB RAM, 3Dfx optional, joystick required

CYBERSTORM2

Publisher: Sierra Online

Category : Strategy

Path: \GAMES\CYBER\CS2DEMO.EXE

The year is 3569 and a newly discovered jumpgate in the Typhoeus system opens many opportunities for wealth and expansion to the corporation that controls its access. The race is on for your corporation to seize control of the jumpgate using whatever forces it takes to win.

Cyberstorm 2 offers both turn-based and real-time gameplay.

Requirements: Pentium-133, 32 MB RAM, SVGA, mouse, soundcard, Win95/98

FORSAKEN

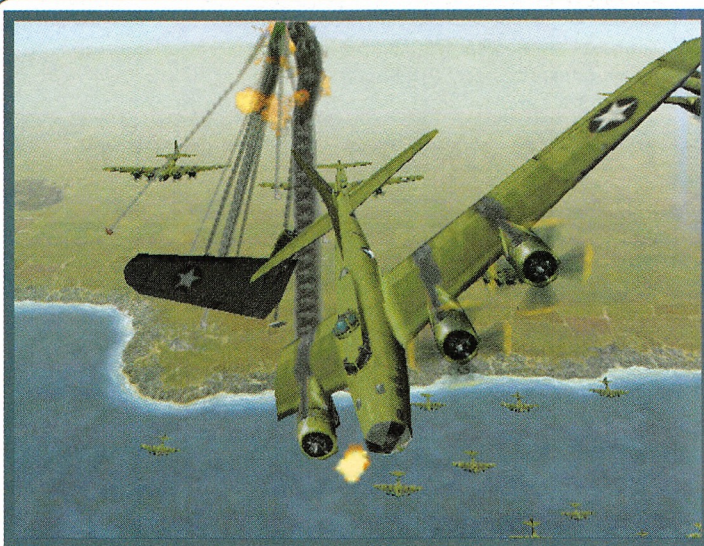
Publisher: Acclaim

Category : Action

Path: \GAMES\FORSAKEN\SETUP.EXE

Back by popular demand, this version of the demo lets you play with or without a 3DFX card. It contains two single-player levels, one multiplayer level, and the complete multiplayer feature set from the full game (supporting up to 16 players over the Internet). On top of that, you get all the weapons and four of the 16 biker characters.

Requirements: P133 CPU, Sound Card, Win95/98, 16 MB RAM, SVGA - 3DFX card optional



EUROPEAN AIR WAR

Publisher: Microprose

Category : Flight Simulator

Path: \GAMES\EAW\SETUP.EXE

Take MicroProse's sequel to 1942: Pacific Air War for a test flight. There are two missions in this demo. In the first, you fly a P-51D Mustang and must escort and protect a B-17. The second demo mission puts you in a Focke-Wulf FW190A-8, and you and your wingmen must shoot down a group of B-17s and their P-15 escorts.

Requirements: Pentium-166, 16 MB RAM, mouse, SVGA, soundcard, Win95/98, 3Dfx card optional

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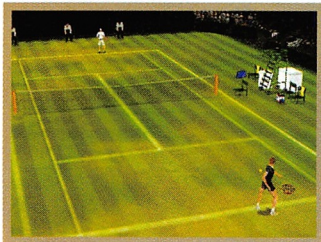
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GAME, NET AND MATCH

Publisher: Blue Byte

Category : Sports

Path: \GAMES\GNM\GNM.EXE

Train with an automatic ball machine and then compete against advanced computer players who experience real human emotions. Once you've mastered the art of slices, smashes, lobs, and volleys, go online and compete in matches over Blue Bytes dedicated tennis server. Each match in the demo is limited to 25 minutes.

Requirements: P166 CPU, Sound Card, 32 MB RAM, Win95/98 - needs 3DFX card

INDEPENDENCE WAR

Publisher: Infogrames

Category : Space Simulator

Path: \GAMES\IWAR\IWAR-N.EXE

Independence War, formally known as I-War has been completely remastered to provide 3Dfx and Voodoo2 graphics acceleration. This demo includes two missions: a combat training mission and a specially modified version of one of the game's storyline missions - Neutronium Galore.

Requirements: P120 CPU, Sound Card, Win95, 16 MB RAM, 3DFX card needed

TOTAL ANNIHILATION: BATTLE TACTICS

Publisher: Cavedog

Category : Strategy

Path: \GAMES\BT\BT

Total Annihilation: Battle Tactics provides smaller, quicker battles that are perfectly suited to satisfying that nagging Total Annihilation urge without requiring several-hour-long slugfests. Players can blast through numerous missions that can be accomplished during a lunchbreak or between classes. Needs full version of game to play.

Requirements: P120 CPU, Sound Card, Win95, 16 MB RAM



HEART OF DARKNESS

Publisher: Interplay

Category : Adventure

Path: \GAMES\HOD\HOD.EXE

Andy's scared of the dark. To make matters worse his doggy pal, Whisky, has been snatched away by the Forces of Darkness. Help Andy face his darkest fears in a secret kingdom, a world of soul-hungry phantoms, bed-time demons, and bizarre monsters in an quest to rescue Whisky.

Requirements: P120 CPU, Sound Card, Win95, 16 MB RAM

All controls are via the mouse and keyboard arrow keys.

PLANE CRAZY

Publisher: SegaSoft

Category : Action

Path: \GAMES\PCRAZY\PCRAZY.EXE

Plane Crazy is a 3D flying, racing game that takes the freedom of stunt flying and combines it with the thrill of high-speed racing. Players compete against human flyers or the computer controlled "Crazy Aces" in order to win and achieve the best race time. This demo includes one Single & Multi-Player course for LAN & TCP/IP.

Requirements: P166 CPU, Sound Card, 16 MB RAM, Win95/98

S.C.A.R.S

Publisher: Ubi Soft

Category : Racing Simulation

Path: \GAMES\SCARS\SETUP.EXE

Humans no longer control the world in 3000 AD. Nine supercomputers with superior intelligence surpassed their human creators many years before. Having developed the capacity for fear, hatred, happiness, and boredom, the computers combat their apathy by racing.

Requirements: P120, Sound Card, 16 MB RAM, Win95/98, 3DFX card

SENSIBLE SOCCER 98

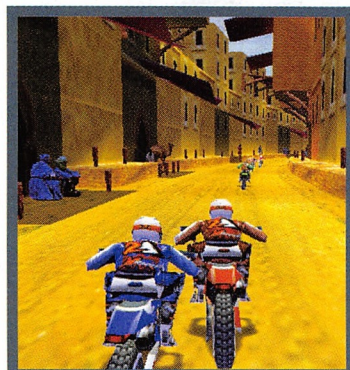
Publisher: Sensible Software

Category : Sports

Path: \GAMES\SS\SS98.EXE

Sensible Soccer '98 is described by Sensible Software as "the most playable soccer game ever to grace the PC". But don't just take their word for it, play the demo and see for yourself.

Requirements: P133 CPU, Sound Card, Win95, 16 MB RAM



MOTO RACER 2

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Category : Motorbike Simulator

Path: \GAMES\MOTO\SETUP.EXE

The sequel to the popular motorbike racing game includes support for all major 3D graphics accelerators in addition to enhanced visuals and special effects. This demo, using 70 percent complete prealpha software, lets you try a couple tracks from the full version and even lets you challenge a friend in split-screen mode.

Requirements: P133 CPU, Sound Card, Win95, 16 MB RAM 3DFX card optional



NEED FOR SPEED 3

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Category : Racing Simulator
Path:

\GAMES\NFS3\SETUP.EXE
One of the best car games available for the PC at this moment in time. Everything you liked in F1GP, Stunts and Fatal Racing into one car game. Need for Speed 3 has many cool features including cop chases, night racing, real-time lighting models, reflective maps on cars, tracks set in familiar locations, 30fps performance, and more.

Requirements: P120 CPU, Sound Card, Win95, 16 MB RAM

TRIBAL RAGE

Publisher: Talonsoft
Category : Strategy
Path:

\GAMES\RAGE\SETUP.EXE
The year is 2030. Years of war, famine and plague have forced the survivors of Earth into tribes that sweep across the wastelands, fighting one another for what precious resources and safe lands that remain. Battle against Bikers, Cyborgs, Amazons, even Death Cultists in a struggle to prevail in a future that is both desperate and outrageous!

Requirements: P120 CPU, Sound Card, Win95, 16 MB RAM

Utilities

Advanced Speed Typing 98

A full-featured typing tutor that's can help anyone who uses a keyboard increase typing speed and accuracy. The program even includes special features for experienced typists. This is a fully functional, 30-day demo version of the program. This program is compatible with Windows 98.

Animagic GIF Animator

Simple yet powerful GIF animation tool that produces output files that are 10 percent to 80 percent smaller than nonoptimized GIFs. The program can also build animations from individual frames or from existing animated GIFs.

AssistBar 98

A toolbar utility that gives you quick access to your favourite programs, files, and folders. To add items, you can simply drag and drop the items onto AssistBar 98.

CDH Media Wizard

Allows the user to play all the popular media formats in one program! There are many programs out there which will play WAV and MIDI or video or CD Audio or MP3 files or RealAudio. This plays them all. Advanced options include looping of media, conversion of CD Audio and WAV to highly compressed, voice quality MP3 format and CD Audio to standard WAV format, and customisation features which allow you to use the application the way you want!

Chameleon Clock

A digital desktop clock that changes its look. Change its "skin" using bitmap digits and WinAmp skins. Features include random change of skins and appearance settings.

Fireworks

A suite of text, design, illustration, image editing, URL, JavaScript, and animation tools that can create everything for your Web site, without the annoyance of jumping from application to application. Its intent is for Web designers who work primarily with images; it provides loads of necessary tools such as complete compression control, visual export preview, colour palettes, JavaScript rollovers, and more.

GoldWave

A digital audio editor for Windows 95. The program has real-time oscilloscopes, intelligent editing, and numerous effects (echo, flange, distortion, mechanize, and reverse, for example). An intuitive user interface makes GoldWave easy to learn and use.

Oil Change

A useful utility that keeps your software up-to-date by downloading an update or patch from the Internet. Oil Change detects which software is on your system and alerts you when a manufacturer has released an update.

Opera

A user-friendly, versatile, and fast Internet/intranet browser

that also offers a newsreader and an email program. The keyboard plays a more integral role in surfing with this browser, which can make moving around the Web easy and fast.

Picture Publisher 8

An image editing software that allows anyone to produce the most exciting, professional photographic effects and Web graphics. Picture Publisher 8 makes creating mind-blowing Web graphics fast and easy with exclusive features and comprehensive functionality for professional image editing.

Powermarks

Program that allows you to create, manage and browse your bookmarks with unprecedented ease. Powermarks can either replace or work in conjunction with the bookmark and favorite features of Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer.

Virus Scanners

Included this month is five popular virus scanners. They are Antivirus Toolkit Pro, Dr Solomons Toolbox, McAfee Virus Scan, Thunderbyte Antivirus, and Vet.

PATCHES

Main patches this month includes a James Bond level for Quake, an awesome new weapon for Unreal and a few addons for Total Annihilation.

Torus Games

Programming Dept.

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SIDELINES

Activision announce Sin add-on

What's a high profile game these days without the obligatory mission pack? Not much, apparently. Every game and its dog has a mission pack made for it nowadays, and Sin will be no different. Activision have announced that 2015, Inc. will be the creators of the official add-on pack, to be released at an unspecified date in the future. Will it be a big seller? Will Sin itself be popular enough to warrant an add-on pack? Definitely, says President and founder of 2015, Inc. Tom Kudirka; "Once people get their hands on Sin they'll definitely want to extend the experience", he said. He went on to say that "[2015, Inc.] hope to deliver more of the same great gameplay and adventure with the addition of exciting twists and surprises".

Good Times virus real!

It's been going on for years, much to the frustration of computer-savvy people. Those 'Good Times' (and derivative) email circulars that threaten and scare newbies and make them forward the warnings on to everyone in the building. Many a network admin has been forced to send a response to let people know that there is no way to include a virus within an email message. But, funnily enough, apparently there is. Reportedly hackers are able to use a flaw in Microsoft's Outlook Express and Netscape's mail clients to affect users' hard disks with disastrous effect (though in truth this has nothing to do with the Good Times virus). Microsoft has released a patch which they think will fix the flaw, but there are reports of malicious emails floating around that purport to be official fixes from Microsoft that are in actuality viruses themselves. Oh, the irony!

Nerds make stars

Management at Westwood Studios seem to be thinking along the lines of; 'If Lara can do it, then so can Seth!'. No, he's not getting a breast implant, but he might be starring in a movie. Yes, that's right, there are plans for a Command and Conquer movie in place, and talks are apparently ongoing with 'top Hollywood executives'. No details on who's going to be taking the starring roles as yet, but we're sure you're all slaving with anticipation, so we'll be sure to keep you informed.

M.A.X. Game designer charged with murder

In a somewhat bizarre and saddening story, it seems that the designer of M.A.X., Larry Froistad Jr., will plead guilty to the highest murder charge possible in North Dakota - Class AA murder. It is alleged that Froistad posted messages in an Internet chat room con-

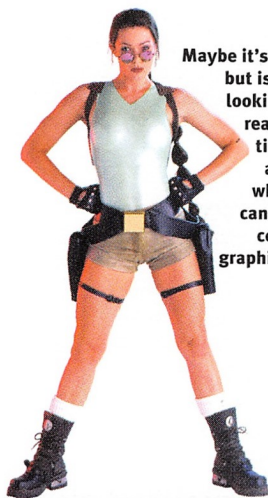
AUREAL'S NEXT-GEN 3D SOUND PROCESSOR

The battle for the hearts and minds of manufacturers and consumers over a 3D sound standard has begun apace. Elsewhere in these pages you'll find a report of Creative Pacific's new positional audio standard, but Aureal Semiconductor are looking to further cement their place as the pre-eminent 3D sound processor developers. They've recently announced the release of the successor to the Vortex processor (used on Diamond's Monster Sound range), the Vortex 2.



Along with support for Aureal's A3D positional 3D audio technology and Microsoft's DirectSound3D, the Vortex 2 includes a 320-voice DLS wavetable engine, with 'Aureal

Wavetracing' which allows "wall [sound] reflections and occlusions to model the acoustic characteristics of the environment". Also, the legacy support for DOS applications has been markedly improved, which was one of the few shortcomings of the first generation A3D cards. There's been no official announcement from companies that they will be using the processor, but a short while ago Diamond entered into a strategic alliance with Aureal to develop sound cards, so it seems very likely that they will be using the chip.



Maybe it's just us, but isn't Lara looking more real all the time? It's amazing what they can do with computer graphics now!

Get your hands on Lara

For those who just can't get enough of Lara, salvation is at hand in the form of a free sanitarium for the incredibly pathetic. No, just kidding, rather than try to help these unfortunate individuals, Playmates Toys is attempting to fuel their sick and twisted desires by releasing a Lara action figure for you to... play with. Measuring 9 inches in height (dimensions on...width

have not yet been released, much to our chagrin), the Lara figure will be released to the slaving hordes at the same time as Tomb Raider 3 hits the shelves. Good news for those imaginative and hilarious individuals who seem to think it's still funny to conjoin action figures together in compromising situations on top of their monitors. Oh the gallons of laughter that's sure to ensue!

HACKERS HIT INTERNET GAMING ZONE

The problems of internet games and illegal (and very, very annoying) hacking of the games continues to plague developers and players alike. Microsoft's Internet Gaming Zone offers play for the VR-1 developed Fighter Ace, a large scale WW2 flight simulation. The game has proved popular with flight sim fans, and has developed a devoted following. Recently, however, hackers have been ruining play for many gamers on the Zone server by using modified aircraft and other irregularities. Each pilot in the game has the ability to record "video's" of their flights, and there have been many recordings of WW2 planes flying in excess of 1000mph (sometimes even backwards!), and automatically repairing themselves. On July 31st, a message was posted to the Fighter Ace newsgroup claiming that "the Fighter Ace Hackers Union now

S: 253 A: 140m T: 100 D: 0%
R: 0 Flaps Up
Ammo: 95%

Crashes: 3 Kills:
Deaths: 4 To SG

The 'Zone' going down in flames! Hardly, just some naughty cheaters who don't appreciate the spirit of the game



owns Fighter Ace and there's nothing you can do to stop us!". Microsoft haven't been keen to acknowledge the problem (though they do admit that some users have violated the game), but developers

VR-1 have indicated that they know what the problem is and are working to fix it. They have also requested pilots to send in their recordings of hackers (or possible hackers) to them for analysis.

EA buy Westwood

Electronic Arts, best known for their sports games such as NBA Live and FIFA 98, today announced that they intend to buy Westwood Studios, which is currently owned by Virgin for US\$122.5 million.

Westwood are best known as the makers of the Command and Conquer (including the upcoming Tiberian Sun) series, along with the Lands of Lore series.

Don Matrick EA's president of Worldwide Studio's said "Westwood is one of the most respected studios in the world, with an impressive portfolio of best-selling franchises and brilliant creative talent... we are excited that Brett and Louis have chosen Electronic Arts to be the new home for Westwood Studios."

The announcement ends rumours about the possible sale of Westwood. Along with the sale of Westwood, EA may also gain certain other studio assets of Virgin.

The deal is expected to be completed by the end of September, and will most likely not affect any current Westwood titles that are currently under production.

In other Westwood news, it was recently announced that they are planning on a Command and Conquer movie. Donny Miele, Westwood's senior producer will be supervising the production, and is currently looking for a mainstream studio to do the movie, although did not rule out the possibility of doing the movie themselves. He says that, "We're excited about the potential because of C&C's huge worldwide following and the success of other video-game properties in the realm of feature films."

EA have almost unlimited coffers, and traditionally don't mess too much with their affiliates' projects. So, good news then.

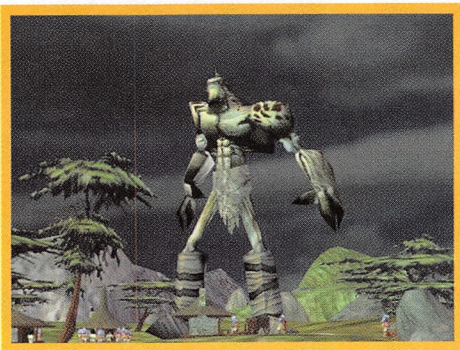


A HELPING HAND FOR THE LITTLE GUYS

Q: When is a publisher not a publisher?

A: When it's a Satellite. Industry legend Peter Molyneux, once head honcho at Bullfrog and now top man at Lionhead, has initiated the latest attempt to subtly alter the games world's traditional developer-publisher structure. Its' Satellites scheme will involve effectively taking small developers under its wing, helping them secure funding and publishing deals, giving them access to Lionhead's libraries, tools and expertise and helping them with administration headaches, in return for an equity stake.

This set-up has been compared to Mike Wilson's Gathering of Developers, although Lionhead's Steve Jackson points out: "We're not interested in publishing and, unlike them, we don't hate publishers." Jackson maintains that part of the rationale behind the Satellites scheme is that: "When we set Lionhead up, our philosophy was never to grow the group bigger than 20 people - as Bullfrog grew big, it became unwieldy and creatively stifled. We're developing the Satellites so that, in a way, Lionhead will be growing, but without Lionhead



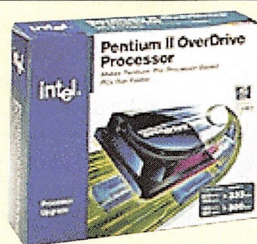
itself growing any larger."

The first Satellite signed up by Lionhead is little-known developer Big Blue Box. The company thinks that, ultimately, it could run up to five Satellite developers. Meanwhile, Lionhead is beaver away at its first game, Black and White, which is due for release in 1999 and said to be visually stunning. Apparently, the game's development hasn't been set back too badly by the defection of co-designer/lead programmer Demis Hassabis - co-creator of Theme Park with Molyneux - to form his own developer, Elixir Studios.

Steve Boxer

Intel find use for Pentium Pro chip!

While the Pentium Pro chipset has found a comfortable niche in the small server market, it never really took off to the same degree that Intel had hoped - despite their large marketing campaign. Many of those who listened to the campaign and have found themselves stuck with a chipset that doesn't really do what they thought it would and was quickly superseded will be overjoyed to hear that Intel have released an overdrive processor for Pro chips that will boost them up towards Pentium 2 performance. It's not a huge



technological innovation though - Intel had Pentium overdrive processors available for 486 owners, and the P2 is basically a Pro with MMX capabilities added (among

other bits and bobs). Retailing in the states for around US\$599, the Overdrive Processor will upgrade 150 and 180MHz Pro chips to 300MHz, and Pro 200MHz systems to 333MHz. Intel estimates that upgrading a 200MHz Pro to a 333MHz overdrive will improve business applications by up to 47%, which should come in very handy indeed when scrolling through Excel documents.

SIDELINES

fessing that he deliberately set fire to his home in 1995, killing his 5-year old daughter. He is also alleged to have posted messages confessing to sexually molesting his daughter, and images of child pornography have allegedly been found on his computer. M.A.X. was originally Froistad's idea, and upon completion the game was dedicated to his daughter in light of her death. If convicted, Froistad faces the highest sentence possible in North Dakota - life in prison with no chance of parole.

Carmack talks about Quake 3

It's still early days, but John Carmack recently spoke at a CPL tournament in Texas about Quake 3: Arena (and yes, that is the correct name). According to Carmack, Q3 will feature a whole host of graphical improvements along with excellent Internet performance for multiplayer. Graphically, he said that Q3 would (probably) feature level of detail (allowing more detail to be added once you get closer, and vice versa), blending maps, interpolated textures, mirrors, feature independent torso and limb movements, weapon changing in 6-odd frames, and plenty more. For multiplayer, Carmack stated that we can expect play to be designed for 2, 4, and 8 characters at a time, and that as much effort as was humanly possible would be made to stop cheaters making an unfair advantage for themselves. Always a candid speaker, Carmack acknowledged that Arena was an experiment for id Software in terms of direction and that they could afford to lose money on the project if it doesn't work as well as they hope. However, if the project is a success, he says that id might look into producing more "sophisticated online games" using Surface Voxel technology, which would allow images of Toy Story-like quality in real time. Doubters beware, for id seem to have lost none of their direction or drive.

Jack comes to your lounge room

Everyone's favourite quiz game (well, our favourite at least) will be available to non-Internet connected people, as well as those who just feel like playing with their friends and family rather than their computer (sad!). Yep, You Don't Know Jack (YDKJ) has been licensed from Berkeley Systems and Jellyvision by Tiger Electronics, who have produced a table top version of the always fun game. Two to four players can play, and there is a total of 500 trivia questions included. And best of all, the board game will come complete with the voice of Cookie, from the CD-ROM games to put you down in his unique way. No details on an Australian release as yet though.

NewsWire

US

Don St John



Well, no question what all the buzz on this side of the Pacific was this month—3D Realms' decision to take all its 3Dfx code on Prey, scrap it, and port everything to work in any 3D environment. That includes DirectX software 3D, and in fact 3D Realms said their decision came primarily because they were so pleased with the DirectX 6.0 release from Microsoft.

Now, you may have seen the immediate furor that broke out on various action-related Usenet groups, and 3D Realms folks could be found posting there with the real, more candid reason they made the switch—they want to sell more games, and their market will be a lot bigger if it's not limited to people with 3D hardware accelerators.

Now, can you just imagine? A company that wants to sell more games? That sounds...well, kinda prudent, actually. And my guess is that this happens to be good for you, too. For one thing, 3D Realms and its distributor GT Interactive both have a lot of money and cred invested in the success of Prey, and they're probably going to bend backwards to make sure it plays seamlessly after this move. For another, it's a good indication that DirectX 6.0 is going to be solid, which is great news for anybody who plays 3D games. (Hell, that's everybody nowadays; UbiSoft is even doing 3D hardware-



accelerated games for little kids!) The Prey developers didn't have to make this switch; that they did says volumes about DX6. With a Voodoo2, you're bound to be set, but if you opt out of the hardware trend, here's one more cool game that's available to you.

As long as I'm praising the Great Satan for apparently finally getting DX6 seamless, I may as well mention something else they've done right. I recently got an advance unit of the Sidewinder Freestyle Pro, Microsoft's motion-sensing gamepad, and frankly, it rocks. I first tried a test unit out in February with a beta of Motocross Madness and found myself glued to the thing, taking the coolest swooping jumps in the stunt quarries. The final version holds up just great and translates very well to a lot of genres; driving games and space shooters are perfect targets for this device. On top of that, it works fine as a standard gamepad and isn't restricted to any particular games—just plug it into the gameport, install the newest Sidewinder software update, and away you go. If you play with anything beyond a keyboard and mouse, this ain't a bad way to go.

NewsWire

UK

Steve Boxer

Large swathes of the UK games industry are currently acquiring a lobsterish hue on the world's beaches, taking advantage of their last chance to slip into a pair of Speedos before ECTS, London's own version of E3. Ever since the number of ECTS shows was halved to one every year, it has acquired the status of the world's second most important games show, and its timing ensures that those games which didn't quite make it to E3 get their first public airing.

While most publishers and developers have been keeping their cards close to their chests in the run-up to ECTS, there has been a certain amount of activity in the industry. Sadly, that activity hasn't included any of the mooted suitors taking Virgin off Viacom's hands. All the companies vying to pop the Virgin's cherry have now dropped out of the running, although the latest rumours suggest that Hasbro has been making overtures. Alas, LucasArts has decided it will jump ship and is seeking another publisher. Rumours that Eidos is toying with acquiring a number of companies, including Psygnosis, haven't acquired any solid form yet, either.

Shiny's Dave Perry (who, you may be aware, is British born and bred) was in town recently (complaining that his hectic schedule meant he couldn't even tell his mother that he was over). In the UK to demo his platform game-meets-torture effort Wild 9 - which sadly looks as though it'll remain PlayStation-only - he revealed that he now has three games in development that use his innovative tessellation engine: Messiah, R/C Stunt Copter and a new project called Sacrifice. Alas, he wouldn't elaborate on precisely what sort of game Sacrifice is, but I think it's safe to assume it won't be a kids' arcade platform effort starring a cute, fluffy bunny. Interplay, meanwhile, has rather bizarrely licensed the Shiny tessellation engine to power Baseball 2000, and Perry cryptically muttered that he expects to sign a major licensing deal for the engine soon.

Controversy over violence in games seems to be flaring up again, as it periodically does. The problem is, it seems, that whereas once you knew where you stand with violent games - huge weapons inflicting gore-spattered injuries on all manner of non-humans - the games industry is becoming more inventive in its depiction of violence. The moral majority will surely soil its underwear when Messiah, whose gameplay is based on finding the most inventive way of forcing characters to kill themselves, arrives. And SCI is considering putting two versions of Carmaggedon II: Carpoolocalypse Now on the shelves, one with green blood, zombies and a 15 rating and one with red blood and human fender-fodder, rated 18. Way to go, guys - if you want to make those games ultra-violent, why not? Let the age ratings take the heat for you.

TOP TEN GAMES

Rank	Title	Developer / Distributor
TW	LW	
1	2	COMMANDOS
EIDOS / OZISOFT		
2	1	UNREAL
GT INTERACTIVE / ROADSHOW		
3	9	MECH COMMANDER
MICROPROSE / DIGITAL LEISURE		
4	8	X-FILES
FOX INTERACTIVE/ EA		
5	3	AFL '98
EA SPORTS / EA		
6	6	CROC
FOX INTERACTIVE/ EA		
7	7	POLICE QUEST: SWAT 2
SIERRA / OZISOFT		
8	13	STARCRRAFT
BLIZZARD / WOLF		
9	17	MIGHT & MAGIC VI
NEW WORLD COMPUTING / DIRECTSOFT		
10	14	SPEC OPS
BMG / GTI		

Week ending 9th August

The ACER best selling charts are carefully compiled from a sample panel of retailers selected across Australia including mass merchants, department stores, specialty software stores and independent outlets. Retailers surveyed include Myer Grace Bros, K Mart, Target, Big W, Harvey Norman, Computer Super stores, Hi-Tech World, Video Games Heaven, Games Wizards, Hedlam Computers, and Software Today. ACER assumes no responsibility for any errors or omissions ©1997

Charts supplied by Australian Computer Entertainment Review

ACER

Speedy CD

An American company NewCom has begun shipping what they are calling the worlds fastest IDE CD-ROM drive. Capable of transfers of up to 6,000kb/s, the drive has an average access time of 75 microseconds (their figures), and will read all the usual CD formats. As to whether the average consumer really needs a CD such as this is questionable, as is the 6000kb/s transfer rate, but we've certainly come a long way since the days of 2x CD-ROMs in a relatively short time. Retailing in America for US\$109.95, there's no word on whether the unit will be distributed locally, or whether other manufacturers will be releasing similar drives as yet.





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VIDEO	RGB analog

HORIZONTAL FREQUENCY	Operation range: 30.0 kHz to 95.0 kHz
VERTICAL FREQUENCY	Operation range: 58.0 Hz to 180.0 Hz
MAXIMUM PIXEL CLOCK	202.5 Mhz
MAXIMUM RESOLUTION	1600 dots (H) x 1200 lines (V)/75 Hz
DISPLAY AREA	392 x 294 mm (1600 x 1200)

*USER DEFINABLE TIMINGS Maximum pixel clock: 202.5 MHz:	
RESOLUTION	Maximum Refresh Rate (Hz)
1152 x 870	103
1280 x 1024	88
1600 x 1200	75

*The table above lists the maximum which the S110 will operate for several standard resolutions. Note that not all video cards are capable of operating at the S110's higher refresh rates.

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PHILIPS

* Screenshot taken from
the upcoming Xena the
Warrior Princess game

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GAME OF THE YEAR



1998

Boom-tish Ta Ra!

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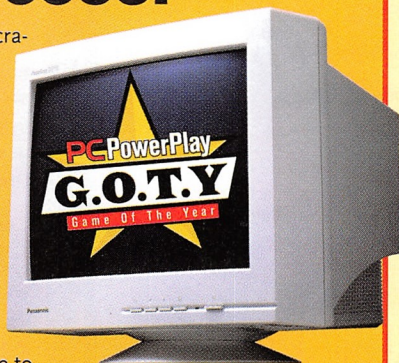
2. GOTY is huge and enormous. Voting runs over 2 issues to give everyone a chance to enter, as well as giving us time to compile the results. There's only one GOTY that matters, the PCPP GOTY. Tell that to any Doubting Thomas! Ha!

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THE GAMES

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- Action first
- Action
- Real Time Strategy
- Turn-based Strategy
- RPG
- Driving/Racing
- Flight Sim
- Action Adventure
- Fantasy Flight Sim
- Adventure
- Puzzle
- Sports

NOVEMBER 1997 Issue 18

- Hexen 2
- Jedi Knight
- G-Police
- Total Annihilation
- Close Combat 2
- Fallout
- Shadows of the Empire
- Man of War
- Dark Colony
- Postal
- Grand Theft Auto
- Sabre Ace
- Ignition
- Outpost 2
- Paris French Open
- Beasts and Bumpkins
- Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee
- Shadow Warrior
- Duckman
- Front Page Sports Golf
- Legacy of Kain
- SU-27 Flanker Mission Disk
- Voodoo Kid
- War Gods
- Moon Buggy 98
- Solar Crusade

DECEMBER 1997 Issue 19

- Blade Runner
- AFL 98
- Tomb Raider 2
- Incubation
- Riven
- Dark Earth
- Take No Prisoners
- Cart: Precision Racing
- Sub Culture
- Galapagos
- Overboard
- Formula Karts
- Worms 2
- Perfect Assassin
- KKnD Extreme
- Dreams to Reality
- Broken Sword 2
- The Tone Rebellion

- Red Alert: The Aftermath
- The Feeble Files
- Resident Evil
- NHL 98
- Virtual Pool 2
- Chasm: The Rift
- Speedboat Attack
- Water World
- 7th Legion
- Monster Trucks
- Daytona USA Deluxe

JANUARY 1998 Issue 20

- TOCA Touring Cars
- FIFA 98
- Myth: The Fallen Lords
- Turok Dinosaur Hunter
- Armoured Fist 2
- Joint Strike Fighter
- Zork Grand Inquisitor
- Netstorm
- Sid Meier's Gettysburg
- X-Car
- Heavy Gear
- Nuclear Strike
- Mage Slayer
- Madden 98
- NBA Live 98
- Flying Corps Gold
- MIB
- Combat Chess
- Evidence
- Jonah Lomu Rugby
- Puma World Football 98

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- I-War
- Seven Kingdoms
- F22 ADF
- Longbow 2
- Curse of Monkey Island
- Imperialism
- Pax Imperia
- Speed Rally
- Steel Panthers
- Jack Nicklaus 5
- Andretti Racing
- Panzer General 2
- VR Sports Baseball 97
- Int. Rally Championship
- Caesar's Palace
- 3D Ultra Pinball
- Streets of Sim City
- Virtua Cop 2
- Civ 2 Fantastic Worlds
- Need for Speed 2 SE
- Blood Plasma
- MTG: Spells of Ancients

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- Uprising
- F-22 Raptor

- Tanarus
- Warhammer 40K
- Journeyman Project 3
- Warwind II
- Flight Unlimited II
- F1 Racing Sim
- Shanghai Dynasty
- East Front
- Air Warrior III
- Hellfire Diablo
- Entrepreneur
- Achtung Spitfire
- SODA Offroad Racing
- Civil War II: Generals
- Croc
- Twisted Metal II
- Jet Moto
- Redneck Rampage: Route '66
- Battleground 8: Waterloo
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- Howzat
- Dungeon Keeper: Deeper
- Hoyle Casino '98

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- Deadlock 2
- The Reap
- C&C Sole Survivor
- Ultimate Race Pro
- Pro Pilot
- Descent To Undermountain
- Balls Of Steel
- Mysteries of the Sith
- Legal Crime
- Manx TT
- Fighting Force
- USCF Chess
- Sega Touring Car Championship
- Beat The House 2
- Actua Golf 2
- Great Battles of Hannibal
- NBA Action '98

MAY 1998 Issue 24

- Star Wars: Rebellion
- Tex Murphy: Overseer
- Incoming
- Starship Titanic
- ■ ■ Ubik
- Shadow Master
- Black Dahlia
- Redline Racer
- Last Bronx
- FPS: Skiing
- Final Conflict
- Semper Fi
- Safe Cracker
- The Golf Pro

JUNE 1998 Issue 25

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- Starcraft
- Die by the Sword
- Jane's F-15
- M1 Tank Platoon
- Warhammer: Dark Omen
- Armor Command
- Star Trek Pinball
- Powerboat Racing
- Queen: The Eye
- Interstate '76 Arsenal
- Dark Reign: Rise of the Shadowhand
- Trophy Bass 2
- Magic the Gathering: Spec. Edition
- Monty Python's Meaning of Life
- Sim Safari
- Wolfenstein 3D

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- Unreal
- ■ ■ Magic VI
- TA: Core Contingency

- Outwars
- Redneck Rampage Rides Again
- Ancient Evil
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- Monster Truck Madness 2
- Pilgrim
- Triple Play 99
- World League Soccer 98
- Warbreeds
- Egypt 1156 BC
- Motorhead
- Of Light and Darkness
- Plane Crazy
- World League Basketball
- Beast Wars
- Mastermind
- Claw
- Monopoly: World Cup 98
- Mechwarrior 2: Titanium
- Tomb Raider: Unfinished Business

AUGUST 1998 Issue 27

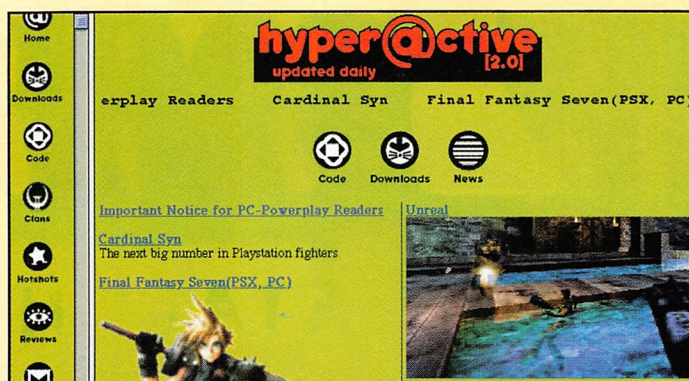
- Mech Commander
- The X-Files
- Descent: Freespace
- Sentinel Returns
- Heart of Darkness
- Final Fantasy VII
- Quake II: The Reckoning
- X-COM: Interceptor
- World Cup 98
- Extreme Tactics
- Alien Earth
- Soldiers at War
- Anastasia
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- Comanche Gold
- Street Fighter Alpha 2
- F22 ADF: Rea Sea
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- Dune 2000
- Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines
- Spec Ops: Ranger Assault
- KknD 2: Krossfire
- Cyberstorm 2: Corporate War
- Stratosphere: Conquest of the Skies
- Team Apache
- Need for Speed III: Hot Pursuit
- International Cricket Captain
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- Indy Racing
- Xenocracy
- House of the Dead
- Bio Freaks
- Civ 2: Multiplayer + classic
- Gex 2: Enter the Gecko
- Bass Masters Classic Tournament

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- Urban Assault
- SWAT 2
- The Creed
- Hard War
- U.F.O
- War Games
- ■ ■ Vangers
- Starcraft Insurrection
- Fields of Fire
- Warlords 3 Darklords
- Adrenix
- Army Men
- Micro Machines
- Cyberball
- Wreckin Crew
- Soldier Boyz
- Ultra Violent Worlds



ONLINE VOTING

Democracy meets cyberspace in this revolutionary step forward for both PowerPlay and humankind. Yes kids, vote online! Just visit Next Gaming's famous and tasty game site Hyperactive and utilise our high-tech online voting form.

www.hyperactive.com

HOW TO VOTE CARD

The awards cover the calendar year that starts at the beginning of November, which means that all the games in this issue round off the year. This way, we cover the big games from last Christmas

Next month (PC PowerPlay # 30) will be the last chance you have to vote. The winners will be published in PC PowerPlay # 32, January 1999.

Just fill in the voting form based on the eligible games. If somehow we've missed your favourite game, go ahead and vote for it anyway! So long as it qualifies for the calendar year.

Important: All votes must be received by the 16th of November 1998!

Voting Form

1998 PC PowerPlay GOTY



Best Game Overall

Worst Game Overall

Best Intro

Best Music

Best sound effects

Best Graphics

First Person Action

Action

Real Time Strategy

Turn-based Strategy

RPG

Driving/Racing

Flight Sim

Action Adventure

Fantasy Flight Sim

Adventure

Puzzle

Sports

Multiplayer

Online Game

it's gonna be a ...

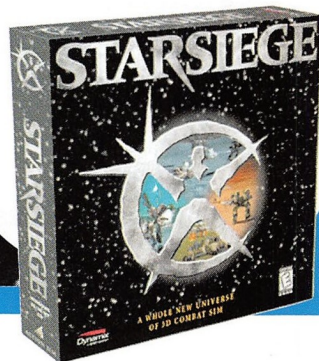
STARSIEGE

Yanks 3D combat sims into a whole new universe with spectacularly beautiful planets, stunningly realistic vehicles & blazingly fast gameplay.

**Feel like you're
inside your own Sci Fi movie**

JOIN US

The **Earth** is
My **Mother**

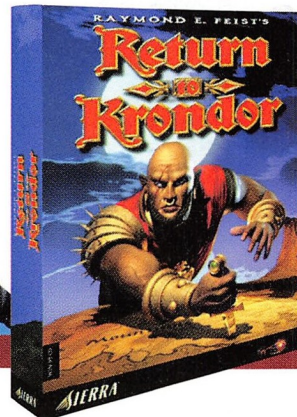


Return to Kronador

Assume the roles of five main characters in a quest over ten plot-twisting chapters and meet over 150 engaging characters.

**Highly anticipated
sequel to best selling RPG, Betrayal at Kronador**

**THE THREAT
IS REAL...**

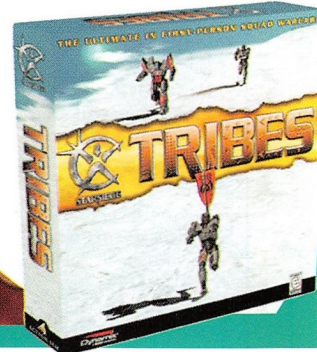


TRIBES

A revolutionary multiplayer, real time, 3D Shooter - the ultimate in first person squad warfare boasting features never seen before in the world of combat games.

When war is a way of life, the warrior is the only way

**TAKE IT FOR
YOUR PEOPLE**



S I E R R A[®]

Look out for these hot new Sierra titles at all major computer stores

HOT SIERRA SUMMER

Life and death at
6500 feet



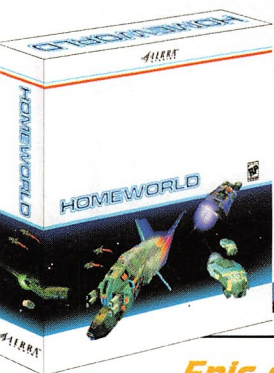
Red Baron 3-D

With full 3D support and a swag of enhancements, the next instalment in the Red Baron series will blow you away.

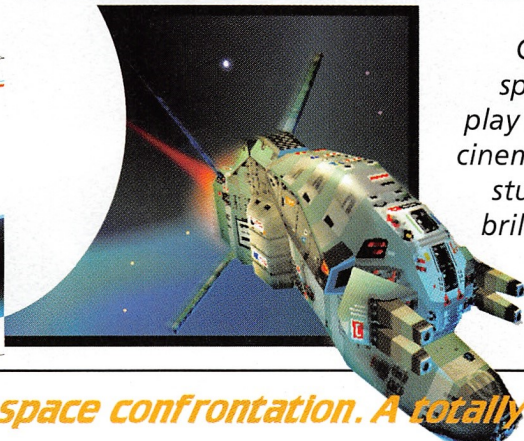
You're on patrol high above the trenches in WWI.



All Game
No Hype



HOMEWORLD

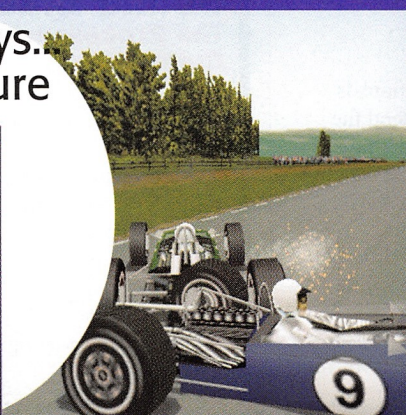
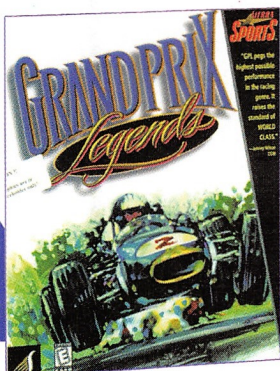


Combines elements of space combat, strategic play and action delivering cinematic-quality graphics, stunning special effects, brilliantly rendered ships and an innovative interface.

Epic space confrontation. A totally fresh experience.



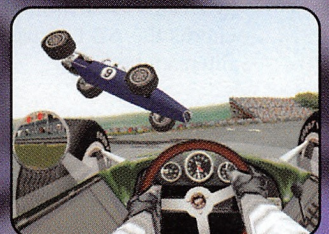
In the old days.
Racing was pure



GRAND PRIX Legends

The most realistic motor racing simulator ever produced. Puts you in the driver's seat of history's most famous race cars on some of the greatest tracks in the world.

In 1968 they changed the rules of motor racing to make it safer..... WELCOME TO 1967



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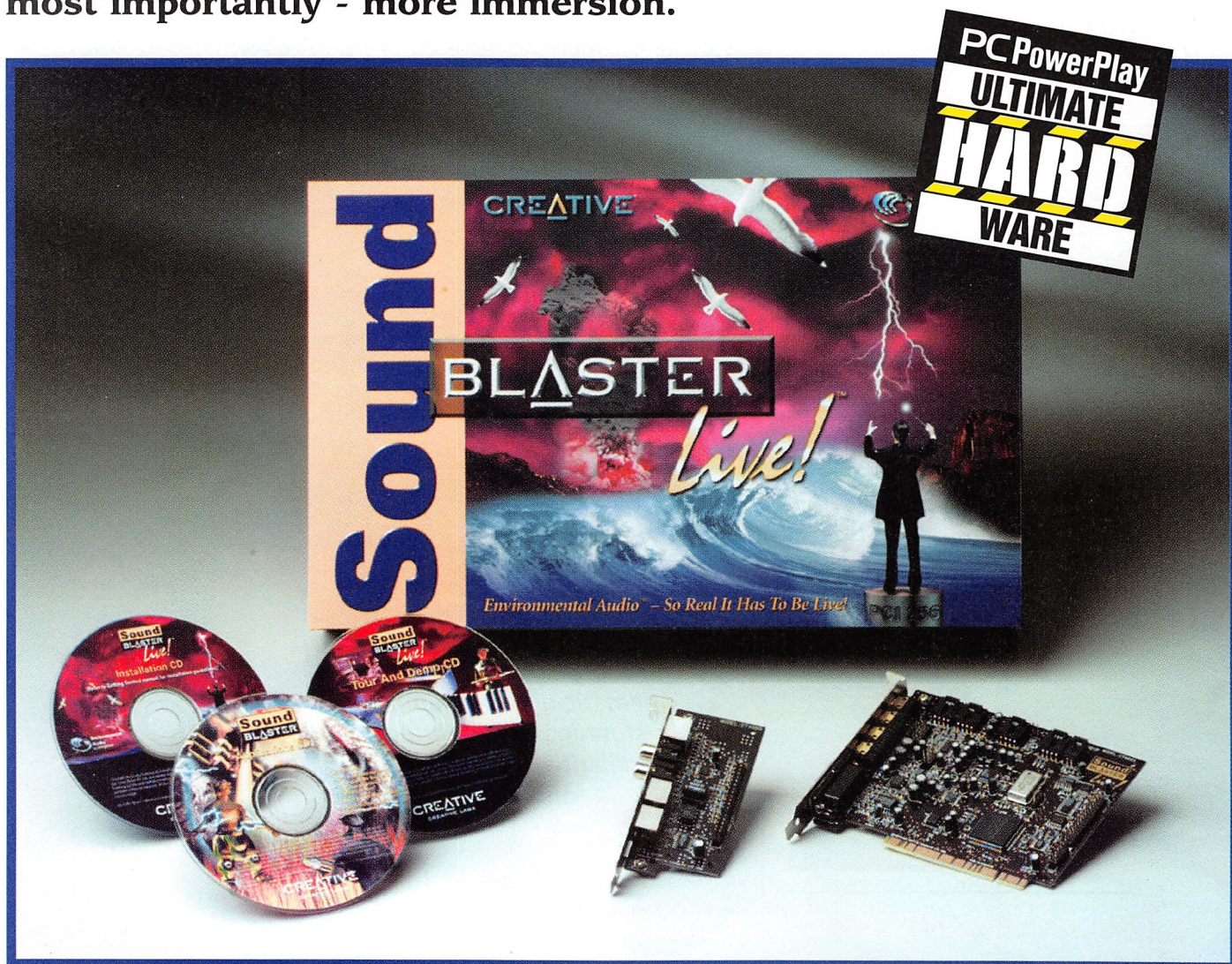
Visit our website: www.dataflow.com.au

ARTDIR 9276



SB LIVE

This second-gen sound card delivers more speed, more power and most importantly - more immersion.



The SB Live doesn't just replicate Live sound, this sound card creates 3D digital environments and sound schemes that literally hang you in disbelief.

Surround sound has been around for a long time and offers rudimentary surround-scapes, such as concert hall, small room, large room etc. The SB Live also offers these surround-scapes, but sounds infinitely better. Where conventional surround technology creates its environments with reverb and chorus the, SB Live uses over 16 different filters and effects.

Always 3D

By far the most amazing aspect of the SB Live is to sample a set of frequencies and send them to different speakers. This means that the SB Live can take a standard stereo non-surround sound source and in real time generate a totally 3D surround experience. I've tested this aspect of the sound card numerous times and it's exceptional.

Actually, exceptional doesn't do justice to what the SB Live can do.

Vocal separation

One of the most amazing functions is called CMSS, which will actually send the vocals to the front speakers only, with the accompaniment to the rear. It works too! I've tested it with Tony Braxton, Green Day, Smashing Pumpkins, silverchair and Enigma. Despite the dramatic and different styles of music offered, CMSS every time managed to discern the vocals correctly, no matter how heavy the background.

On top of that, you hear sounds from your music CDs you've never heard before. SB Live can literally change the dynamics of your room on the fly. You're transported to whole new worlds that 3D accelerators can't compete with. Where they only generate images in little windows (monitors) the SB Live uses speakers all around you that actually modify the real world physics of wherever you are.

Sound Blaster Live The Processor/card Quick Data:

- Microphone in
- Line in
- Line level out (front)
- Line level out (rear)
- Joystick port
- CD Audio in
- Auxiliary in
- Digital CD in
- Telephone answering device in
- RCA S/PDIF in
- RCA S/PDIF out
- Mini MIDI DIN in
- Mini MIDI DIN out
- Digital DIN for multiple digital speakers.
- Frequency response 10Hz - 44KHz
- Signal to Noise ratio 96 dB

The second, smaller card has outputs for digital speakers & true Midi ports

The heart of this baby is something to behold. The SB Live is powered by the newly developed EMU10K1 integrated music, audio and effects engine. It processes all operations at 32 bit 48 KHz (above CD quality) and uses 8 point interpolation to smoothen the sound source outputting an unprecedented average noise floor of -120dB.

It also can output, process, mix and position 131 separate audio streams. The only competitor to this has been the Diamond MX200 which could do 24. The icing on the cake however has to be that the _conservative_ rating of this processor is 2 MIPS. That is, it can handle 2 Million instructions per second).

Midi Quick Data:

- 256 voice polyphony output
- 48 midi channels with 128 GM/GS compatible instruments and 10 drum kits.
- 8Mb on board memory or alternatively (like AGP) use up to 32Mb by sharing system memory.

Midi is something that has been considerably neglected in numerous sound cards released. Since the AWE32 many years ago, Creative have always had the best Midi output thanks to the EMU wave table chip and more importantly a developed technology called Sound Fonts that allows you to download whole new instrument sets to the card.

Sound fonts are one of the most useful of all sound card functions yet was only ever used by a few software developers (Origin being the company that took advantage of them the most). By being able to upload sounds to the card beforehand, it eases a lot of the processor required in sound playback.

Irrespective of games though, numerous Sound font midi files have been created on the net and offer exceptional playback. Some of the techno/electronic music easily rivalling both underground and commercial releases. The SB Live obviously includes Sound Font support, but has extended on it greatly with 256 polyphonic voices.

Wave Quick Data:

- Real Time digital effects on all sources.
- Process 131 audio streams
- Customizable effects architecture and channel control.
- Full digital mixer (not analogue)

Wave output for the SB Live like everything else it does is just extraordinary with every sound discernible. On a standard card such as the Diamond Monster sound, its max kilobit range is 128. Meaning that 192kb (CD) sounded like 128kb (most wave output).

I was impressed with the Orchid Nusound's ability for dissemination between 192 and 128 kilobit audio, on the SB Live however the difference is even greater. Listening to 128kb audio is good, however, once you listen to 192kb (48 KHz) audio on the SB Live sounds are crisper, clearer, more exciting. It's audio perfection.

The penultimate example of this technology however is applying one of the many surround effects to 192kb audio. Changing the setting from normal to say an arena or concert hall brought consistently different layers to the fore. A triangle subtly pinging in the background with an environment change can be brought to the foreground with pristine clarity.

Environmental Audio Extensions (EAX)

Quick Data:

- DirectX 5 & 6 fully compatible plugin.

Environmental Audio is an exciting set of extensions for the SB Live. As has been discussed, the SB Live can process multiple effects (echo, flange, chorus, pitch shifting etc.) on multiple sound sources.

Environmental Audio means walking into a cave and having everything you do sound as if you're in a cave. Fire a shotgun, it will echo appropriately, as will your footsteps. Walk into an open area, the sound dynamics will change again.

To make this easy to program Creative have developed EAX which is an open standard for Direct X 5 and 6. With full support for Direct Sound and Direct Sound 3D, EAX will mean that SB Live (native) support will be as well received as a Direct X compatible 3D accelerator. Besides, if we've learnt anything from 3Dfx, it's that the best always gets the support. In the way that the 3Dfx supports Direct X, Open GL and glide, you can expect the same kind of overall support for the SB Live.

There's nothing like Live sound

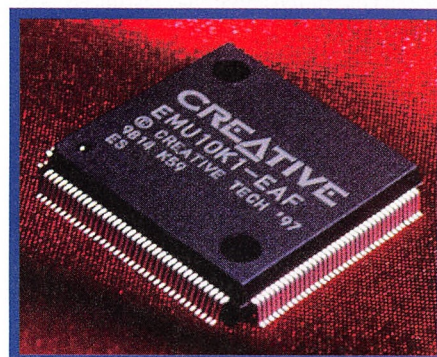
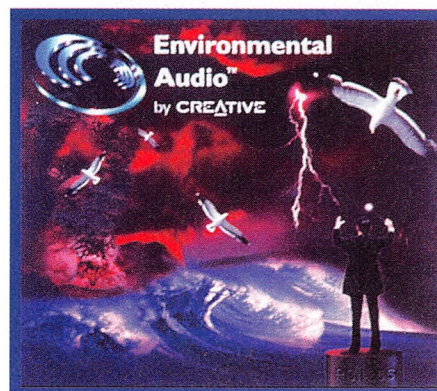
Diamond has had it their way for quite a while now with the 3D/MX200. Not to put

them down, they did have the first digital surround card, but A3D just didn't deliver 4 speaker quality very well. Likewise, there was never any software supported for the MS3D, all that functionality in the end was for naught.

The SB Live with its superior sound quality, EAX for games, EMU10K1 processor and surround effects is the sound card to have. Ditch whatever you've got and run to purchase one. Software support is inevitable and like 3Dfx titles continue to grow. This is quite simply the card to have. Thanks to Creative, gaming has taken another immersive step forward. Good times these, Damn good times.

Jere Lawrence

SB Live's Environmental Audio is generated by the all-new EMU processor



XTERMINATOR GAMEPAD

Gravis

RRP: \$129.95

Playcorp (039) 329 2999

Available: 4th Quarter

Where in PC land have been less than saturated with gamepads, the staple of consoles everywhere. Microsoft's Sidewinder Gamepad has been the king of PC gamepads so far, mostly because there just aren't that many viable alternatives. The Gravis Xterminator, despite the rather silly name, is in many ways a serious contender though, it has all of the functionality required for a gamepad, plus a few extra bits and bobs, and the only place it falls down a little is in the comfort department. It's just a little unwieldy to hold and for extended gaming periods of button thrashing, it didn't quite measure up. Apart from that



however, this is a very handy device to have. Along with the standard 6 buttons plus 2 shoulder buttons and an 8 way directional pad, the Xterminator also comes with an extra two flipper buttons further up on the shoulder which give proportional responses.

Big 'n' nobby, this pad feels very right indeed

Also, you get a joystick-like directional pad, a nicely accessible throttle switch, and even a programmable macro button for those combo moves. At \$129.95 it's not too expensive either, so if you're looking for a gamepad it's worth getting down to your local

gamestore to give this a try.

PANAFLAT PF70 MONITOR

Panasonic

RRP: \$1299

CRT Type: 17 inch pure flat screen

Viewable area: 15.9 inches

Stripe Pitch: 0.24mm

Surface: Anti-glare, anti-static coating

Horizontal frequency range: 30kHz to 86 KHz

Vertical frequency range: 50Hz to 160Hz

Connectors: 15 pin mini D-sub, 5 BNC

Max resolution: 1280x1024 at 75 Hz

Power consumption: 130W

Dimensions: 410 wide x 416 high x 438 deep

Weight: 21kg

The Panaflat PF70 is Panasonic's new entry into the monitor market. It's a good-quality flat screen 17" monitor.

First impressions after unpacking it is that it's very light for its size, which is great for gamers who transport their PC's for LAN parties, and it has a good footprint - not too big. Be forewarned though, the 'whoop' noise that it makes when it turns on scared the bejesus out of me and it may disconcert people who are not used to PC peripherals making very loud noises.

The installation of the driver from the supplied disk went ahead relatively smoothly and the driver works for Win95 and Win98. With the supplied driver you can run the monitor as high as 1280x1024 at 75Hz, although writing becomes much too small to read at this resolution. It would be useful perhaps for graphical applications, but the power graphics user would be better off investing in a larger monitor rather than a 17" run at a high resolution.

One thing you should be aware of before you invest in a flat screen monitor is the 'concave' appearance of the screen. This could be due to the fact that after viewing convex screens for so many years, a flat screen appears relatively concave, but it can be disconcerting at first.

The PF70 also features a full range of digital on-screen controls. The only control that is missing is vertical pincussion, which may not be an issue depending on your video card. It also comes supplied with comprehensive documentation that walks you through every aspect of installation and use. It also includes very anal tables on preset modes, resolutions and horizontal/vertical frequencies which is very important if you need to run this monitor under UNIX/Linux.

Something that irked me was the fact that the documentation makes much mention of the BNC connectors at the back of the monitor



Did we say 'flat'? The viewing area is curveless

and how great BNC is, but the cable that comes supplied with the monitor is a standard VGA cable. This is very annoying, as BNC cables are only \$25 or so and could easily have been included instead of the regular VGA.

For its price, you'd have to seriously decide if a flat screen monitor is that important to you. If size and resolution are all that appeals, you could find an equivalent non-flat screen for around \$800.

George Argy

DIAMOND VIPER V550

Preview by Gary Wallis

RIVA TNT + Diamond Multimedia = explosive performance

Diamond's latest video card to be graced with the Viper name is based on the new NVIDIA RivaTNT video accelerator chip. The RivaTNT is NVIDIA's latest chip with a big reputation to uphold. NVIDIA have hyped up the RivaTNT chip as much as its previous Riva128 processor was. Talk of Voodoo2 killer and SLI beater have been banded around, does the TNT live up to the hype?

RivaTNT Specifications

Controller: NVIDIA RivaTNT 128Bit

Bus Type: PCI 2.1 or AGP 1.0

Memory: 16MB 125MHz SDRAM

RAMDAC: 250MHz

3D Features: • Alpha Blending, Full screen Anti-Aliasing, Bilinear Filtering, Trilinear Filtering, Anisotropic Filtering, Hardware Bump Mapping, Environment Mapping, Fogging, Gouraud Shading, MIP Mapping, Hardware Triangle Setup Engine (10GFLOP Floating Point Geometry), Perspective Correction, Specular Highlights, Single Pass Multitexturing

Max Resolution: 1920x1200 (2D + 3D)

Max Fill Rate: 50Mega Pixels Per Second

Z buffer: 24bit

Video Playback: • MPEG-1, MPEG-2, (AGP only), X and Y scaling and filtering, Color space conversion

These specs certainly do look very good on paper. But anything can look good, does the TNT really perform as fast as they say? To answer this question Diamond were happy to lend PC PowerPlay an early Alpha release of the Diamond Viper V550, which just so happens to have a RivaTNT on board.

The drivers used for the testing were Diamond V550 Windows98 driver version 212A and were on the most part pretty stable being beta drivers. The only problems we really had with this card is with OpenGL and Quake II that is what the fails are. When the drivers mature a little more I am sure these problems will not be a problem. When Quake II worked it was better than ever.

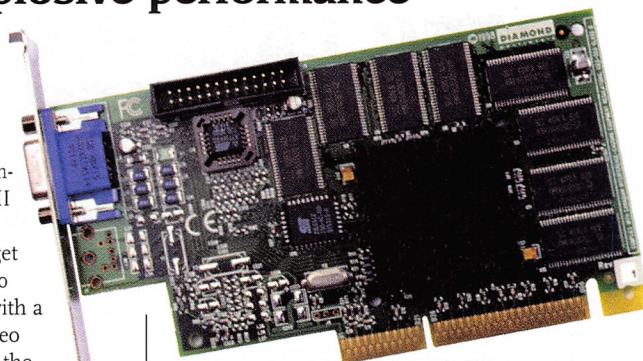
Cast your gaze over at the benchmark scores, you will see that the RivaTNT based

Diamond V550 is certainly no slouch in the speed department. A Pentium II 300MHz system was used for testing, we also managed to squeeze in some Quake II tests on a Super7 based K6-2 300MHz. The only way I could get Windows98 to install at all was to build the Windows installation with a old PCI Diamond Stealth 64 Video VRAM card. Once this was done the Viper 550 quite liked the super7. Diamond, it would be nice if your drivers could either inform the user that the motherboard they are installing the drivers on a Super7 board and will need to install the AGPGART device from the motherboard manufacturer after the drivers have installed. The Viper drivers used are still in beta and are constantly being updated with new versions. Expect the final release card to post even higher benchmark scores with newer drivers.

Benchmark scores for Forsaken are already beating a single Voodoo2 at 800x600, let alone being able to run QuakeII at 63.34 Frames Per Second at 1024x768! The TNT also beats a single Voodoo2 in our Turok tests at both 640x480 and 800x600.

The Quake II scores are a different story, the Viper 550 isn't too bad - being able to crank out Quake II at 800x600 and 1024x768 very close to a single Voodoo2 performance. You may have noticed how I've emphasized the word 'single' when comparing the TNT to the Voodoo2's performance. Currently the RivaTNT-powered Viper 550 isn't close to the performance of a SLI voodoo2 setup and probably won't ever be. That's not to say this card is no good, I believe it's probably one of the best 3D cards I've had the pleasure of testing. The Diamond V550 card is also a screamer in the 2D department, couple that with its awesome 3D performance and you have a definite winner. Quake II at 1024x768 in 32bit colour running at around 22.1 frames per second on a K6-2 300, certainly a sight to behold.

We will definitely try to get one of these cards to put it through its paces when the drivers have matured and the board is in final production.



The prototype TNT V550 board we tested

Benchmark scores

DIAMOND VIPER 550 RIVATNT

PII 300

Incoming

640x480x32bpp	43.03
640x480x16bpp	47.08

800x600x32bpp	39.00
800x600x16bpp	46.25

1024x768x32bpp	28.58
1024x768x16bpp	36.50

Forsaken

640x480x16bpp	76.81
800x600x16bpp	76.18
1024x768x16bpp	63.34

Turok

640x480x16bpp	99.1
800x600x16bpp	98.6

Final Reality

3D Transfer Rate	62.84 Mbytes Per Second
3D Total	3.86 Reality marks
2D Radial Blur	29.28 Frames Per Second
Chaos Zoomer	45.52 Frames Per Second
2D Total	3.13 Reality marks
Total	3.44 Reality marks
AGP Test (16MB)	50.35 Frames Per Second

Test Configuration

Pentium II 333 (Underclocked)

• MSI 6111 440LX Motherboard

AMD K6-2 300

• Aopen AX59Pro Motherboard

Common components

• 64MB SDRAM DIMM (PC66)

• Diamond Viper V550 Video Card

• TeraSound 64 PCI Sound Card

• 4.3 GB Quantum Fireball SE UDMA/33

• 24x Acer CDROM

Quake II OpenGL Performance

	Pentium II 300	AMD K6-2 300	AMD K6-2 (3DNOWGL)
640x480x32bpp	47.0	26.1	30.6
640x480x16bpp	52.4	31.0	Fail
800x600x32bpp	39.0	26.8	30.6
800x600x16bpp	50.7	30.4	Fail
1024x768x32bpp	Fail	22.1	23.0
1024x768x16bpp	38.7	27.0	Fail

LOUD

ALTEC LANSING ACS48 POWERCUBE PLUS SPEAKER SYSTEM

RRP: \$349

More info from: Innovision 1300 785 795

Driver (satellites): 1 x 3 inch mid-range, 1 x 3/4 inch tweeter

Drivers (subwoofer): 1 x 6 inch long throw woofer

Frequency response: 32Hz - 20kHz

Satellite Power: 20 Watts RMS per channel at <0.8% THD

Subwoofer Power: 40 Watts at <0.8% THD

Input impedance: >10k Ohms

Signal to noise ratio: >75dB

Crossover frequency (subwoofer): 150Hz

Crossover frequency (satellites): 4kHz

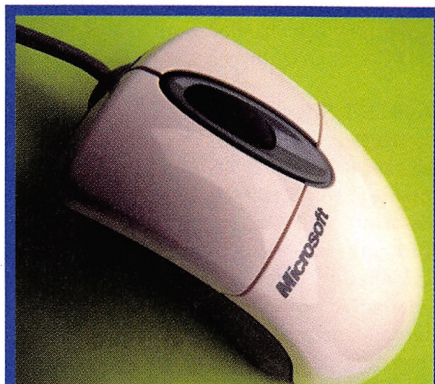
Fuse Type: 2 AMP 250V "slow blow" (5 x 20mm size)

This is really an incredibly good sound system for the price. Altec Lansing have had their speakers in our pages before, and they have always rated highly in terms of quality and value for money, and nothing has changed. You might well be looking at the picture and thinking that such small satellite speakers wouldn't be able to pump out the high-fidelity high-power sound that's required for serious gaming, but you'd be extremely wrong.

Suffice to say that when we (purely for testing purposes) pumped up Unreal on full volume it took about 5 seconds for everyone else in the office to run over either to nod agreeably or hurl abuse about the volume. And this was with practically no distortion either, the clarity and warmth that

you get from these little babies is enough to satiate even the most discriminating audiophile. Couple this with a 3D sound card and you're looking at gaming heaven. Especially when you consider that the subwoofer is a big meaty slab of wooden floor shaking fun.

With many of the computer oriented 3 or 4 piece sound systems around today, you have to deal with a whole mess of wires and cables - not so with the ACS48. Only one power cord is required, emanating from the subwoofer, with one cable leading to the first speaker and an outlet cord for the second. Nice, clean, simple, and effective. And so is the controls on the speaker themselves. No messing about with bass and treble controls, no wanky spatialiser button, just volume up and down (which doubles as a power on/off button). Simply put, the economical design both space-wise and in terms of functionality, the deep and floor shaking bass response from the subby, and the comparatively cheap price make this a fantastic system for us gamers. Now, if they only would see the light and start making them in black rather than boring blah beige the world would be a perfect place.



Microsoft Wheel Mouse

Featuring an all-new lumpy-chunky design, the latest MS Mouse is still the rodent of choice for gamers.

\$129.00 is the RRP, but for that you get the all-new BIG design, a wheel rolly thing that doubles as a 3rd button (FANTASTIC for Unreal), plus the most exciting new feature: rubber inlays.

So it's a new mouse. Big deal. Except it's the best in the world, that's got to matter to someone.



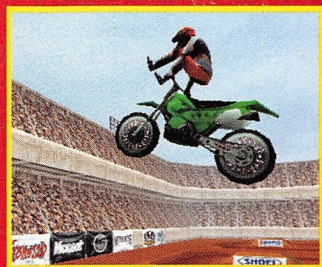
They might not look mighty and awesome, but the ACS48's pump quality sound like nothing else



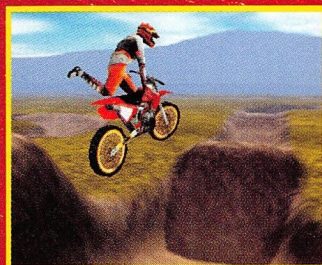
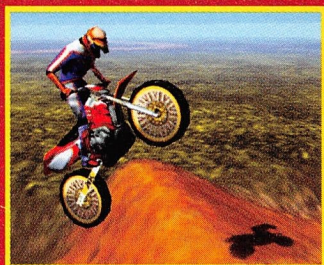


Odds of landing this move: 10 to 1.

Odds of fathering children afterwards: 1,000,000 to 1.



Sick stunts and even sicker crashes. 16 get-some-serious-air stunts, like the outrageous Heel Clicker and insane Nac-Nac. Loads of notify-your-next-of-kin wipeouts. Either way you land it, you're a crowd favourite.

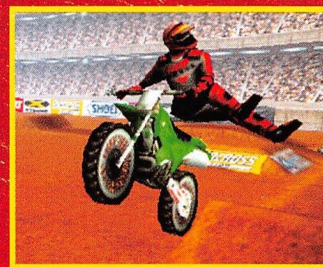


MOTOCROSS MADNESS™

Start the madness at www.microsoft.com/games/motocross

What makes a phat ride? Physics. Separate physics models for rider and bike mean you can pull wheelies out of the gate, dive into hairpin turns, and showboat during your Big Kahuna stunt (as if the Big Kahuna ain't showboaty enough).

Choose a track. Or not. Over 30 tracks, including Supercross, Nationals, Baja, and the dreaded Stunt Quarry, plus off-track terrain that's so hairy you may find yourself saying, "Track? What track?"



Boredom is a four-letter word. You'll constantly admire the mind-messingly photorealistic environment, whether you're face-down in the dirt or 20 feet in the air. And keep it all fresh with a built-in track editor and 8-person multiplayer capability.

Motocross madness goes off with the Microsoft Sidewinder® Freestyle Pro.



Motocross Madness™ requires a 3-D card.

Microsoft

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AMD K6-2 300MHz

The Gamer's CPU

AMD strikes back with an Intel-beating 3D-enhanced CPU

The AMD K6-2 processor, running at 266MHz and 300MHz, should now be widely available by the time this article goes to press. This new CPU's major advantage is that it has 21 new instructions for dealing with complex single precision floating point mathematics. These 21 instructions called '3DNOW!' attain their speed by utilising a technique that was used in Intel's MMX instructions. This technique known as SIMD (Single Instruction Multiple Data) which allows up to 4 pieces of data to be operated on in parallel. Using this technique, the K6-2 can perform four of these floating point operations every clock cycle. The Pentium II core can only execute a maximum of one FPU instructions per clock at best.

3DNOW!

These instructions, as their name suggests, are mainly aimed at accelerating 3D processing which requires complex mathematical algorithms for constructing the 3D scenes. These '3DNOW!' instructions also have other applications that require repeated complex operations to be performed. Decoding of MPEG, JPEG, and other compression schemes is one such application. The main reason why a gamer would be interested in these '3DNOW!' instructions is for accelerating of their 3D games, '3DNOW!' is perfect for accelerating all three of the sections in the 3D-rendering pipeline.

Making it in 3D

A 3D-rendering pipeline usually consist of these three major stages:

- **Geometry transform, Clipping and Lighting**

The first stage of the pipeline is Geometry transform, Clipping and Lighting and is always performed by the processor in all current 3D accelerators except one new card which will ship with a special Pinolite Geometry processor on board, but more about that card at a later stage. The Geometry transform and lighting section of the pipeline requires a considerable amount of floating point processing power, which is why the Pentium II with its pipelined FPU excels at this. The K6-2's advanced 3DNOW! Instructions will also aid considerably in this section providing the latest breed of accelerators with enough information to blast those frames onto the screen.

- **Triangle Set up**

The second stage of the pipeline is also a very demanding part for floating point

instructions and integer operations. This is where the actual polygons are converted to a 3D view on your monitor screen, by converting the coordinates of the scene into one perspective view (1st person, 3rd person, etc). Older 1st generation 3D cards like the Voodoo 1 relied on the CPU to perform this complex processing task of the pipeline. This starts to become a major problem as the CPU is really starting to struggle to perform both of these sections of the pipeline and keep up the 30 frames per second. Now all 2nd generation 3D cards like the Voodoo2 and the Riva128 have a triangle setup engine built in. This gives the CPU more time to perform the very complex 1st stage of the pipeline.

- **Pixel Rendering**

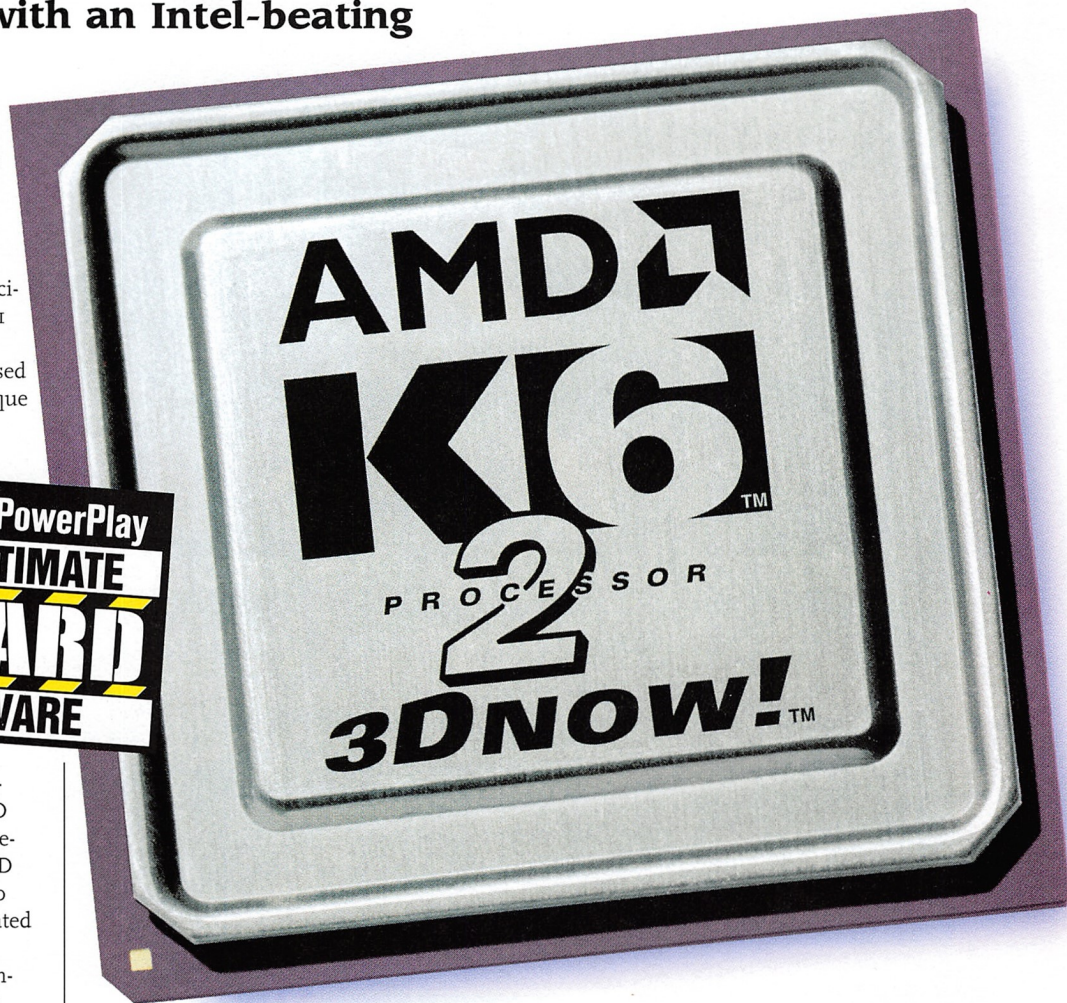
This stage of the pipeline is exactly why 3D accelerators were conceived in the first place. The CPU isn't very good at rendering pixels to the screen, as playing Quake II in software rendering mode will prove. The processor could conceivably produce output that matches any one of the 3D cards on the market today, but unfortunately the processing power of current CPUs would mean the you would get around 1 frame every 10 seconds if your lucky. This is because the com-

putational muscle needed to perform pixel rendering with all the features enabled like alpha blending, Trilinear filtering and all those other cool effects would certainly cause even the fastest general purpose CPUs come crumbling to its knees. Viva La accelerator.

Those unlucky enough not to have an accelerator can use '3DNOW!' to accelerate the pixel rendering section of the pipeline, just don't expect anywhere near Voodoo2 performance or quality though. A '3DNOW!' patch should be available soon for Unreal, giving people with no accelerator the capability to play Unreal at a decent frame rate using the software renderer.

- **Physics and AI**

There is also another area to the pipeline that '3DNOW!' can also accelerate. This area includes Artificial Intelligence and game physics. The physics engines of most games are pretty bad, i.e. the characters in the game slide when walking. With '3DNOW!' full physics models could be used in a game to simulate forces like gravity. So that when players move their whole objects motion could be worked out as if it were moving in the real world. This means if you were to walk your characters feet would lift and lower and not seem to slide.



OpenGL Performance

AMD K6-2 300MHz

Standard OpenGL

640x480 **37.80**
800x600 **38.20**

OpenGL 3DNow!

640x480 **51.60**
800x600 **45.80**

OpenGL 3DNow! + 3Dfx Voodoo 3DNow!

640x480 **53.40**
800x600 **46.60**

Pentium II 300MHz

Standard OpenGL

640x480 **56.70**
800x600 **40.40**

DirectX Performance

	AMD K6-2 300MHz		Pentium II 300MHz	
	DirectX 5.2	DirectX 6.0	DirectX 5.2	DirectX 6.0
Incoming 640x480	48.92	48.78	57.21	Not Run
Incoming 800x600	42.78	43.47	40.35	Not Run
Forsaken 640x480	70.02	75.19	88.53	84.29
Forsaken 800x600	65.75	69.27	68.49	68.88
Turok 640x480	59.70	58.70	84.30	86.60
Turok 800x600	60.20	58.30	82.80	84.10
Final Reality Overall	2.96 Rmarks	3.25 Rmarks	3.45 Rmarks	3.74 Rmarks
Final Reality 3D	3.22 Rmarks	3.71 Rmarks	3.99 Rmarks	4.13 Rmarks
Final Reality 3D Bus Transfer Rate	31.16 MBytes	49.16 MBytes	38.02 MBytes	89.90 MBytes

But will it be supported?

DirectX and 3DNow!

So, we have a new processor with 21 new instructions with some amazing processing ability. The one problem is that these new instructions have to be programmed for specifically. That is, if the game or application doesn't know about '3DNow!' this extra processing power will sit dormant. One way to support these instructions is to natively provide '3DNow!' support in a game or application, but not all developers will provide this feature as it requires a lot of development time. The benefit of this method is the developer can optimise the '3DNow!' code to suit their engine perfectly. The only problem with this implementation is that like I said it is very development intensive.

A much easier way and a way that a lot of the smaller development houses will use is to take advantage of someone else's '3DNow!' code, that is, using an API (Application Program Interface) such as DirectX or OpenGL. DirectX 6.0 will be the first version of DirectX that will support these '3DNow!' instructions, OpenGL v1.2 and Glide will also include native '3DNow!' support. The last

method is to include '3DNow!' code in the graphics card drivers themselves. Companies like nVidia, 3DFX, ATI and others have all pledged to provide this support.

DirectX seems to be AMD's best bet for acceptance of these new instructions, which are now to be implemented not only by IDT in their WinChip-2 3D, but also by Cyrix in their future processors based on the Cayenne and Jalopeno cores.

DirectX, T & L and 3DNow!

The last DirectX release, version 5, certainly provided a lot of support and compatibility - especially in the DirectX3D component. Except one slight problem, DirectX 5's DirectX3D transform and lighting engine is very slow. Because of this, the T & L engine wasn't up to scratch and game companies and developers would need to bypass DirectX's engine and use their own faster engine implementations.

This is a good thing for game quality and speed, but a bad thing for '3DNow!'. I'll explain why. 3DNow! Requires DirectX 6.0 to allow for these special 21 new instructions to do their magic. Now, the T

& L part of the rendering pipeline is exactly what '3DNow!' does the best. To take advantage of '3DNow!' games will require that they be designed for DirectX 6.0 and must then utilise DirectX3D's transform and lighting engine. Most games at the moment do not have DirectX 6.0 support, but this will change in the near future as most developers that use DirectX have all pledged that they will use DirectX 6.0. But what if the game developers decide to bypass the T & L engine in DirectX 6.0? This time it will be advantageous for game developers to include '3DNow!' instructions in their own T & L engines, so it shouldn't be too much of a problem.

SPEED NOW!

This above problem is certainly highlighted in our test results, games like Turok and Incoming receive little or no performance increase from '3DNow!' So what good is it then? Well just cast your glance over at the Quake II scores. These frame rates are up there with a 300MHz P2. At higher resolutions the K6-2 starts to really excel, we didn't have two Voodoo2's to test the K6-2 in an SLI situation but looking at the 800x600 scores you will see that the K6-2 beat the Pentium II by over 6 frames a second! For those that don't have the Pentium II sort of budget, the K6-2 running at 300MHz will certainly make a very competent gaming rig for novices and hard core gamers alike.

I think AMD have made the right decision to include these instructions in the K6-2 - about time somebody did something with the x86 architecture apart from Intel. Highly recommended.



Basic System Performance

AMD K6-2 300MHz

Norton SI Index **136.9**
Winbench 98 CPU Mark 32 **778**
Winbench 98 FPU Winmark **978**

Pentium II 300MHz

Norton SI Index **138.1**

AMD K6-2

...continued

BENCHMARKED

A close look at the results

Just taking a general glance at the benchmark results for the K6-2 will show you that this processor (when coupled with a Voodoo2) is certainly capable of running any of the current crop of games at a decent speed.

The benchmarks were run on both a K6-2 running at 300MHz and a Pentium II running at 300MHz for comparison purposes. The tests were also performed on the K6-2 under both DirectX 5.0 and DirectX 6.0 to see if any games would take advantage of '3DNow!'.¹

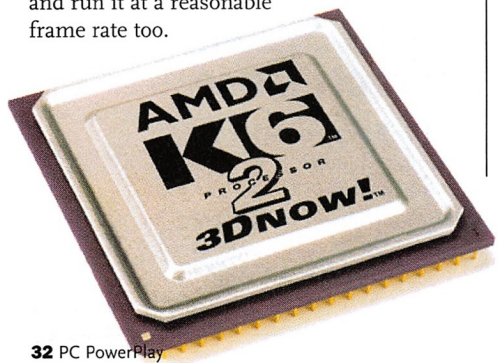
We noticed that DirectX 6.0 only seemed to increase system speed on the K6-2 in line with how it increased the speed on the Pentium II test bed. This would point to the fact that most of the games we use for benchmarking are not being accelerated by the '3DNow!' instructions at all. The increase in speed with the special version of Quake II that is provided by AMD themselves shows how much potential '3DNow!' really has.

Did you see that? Frames Per Second explained

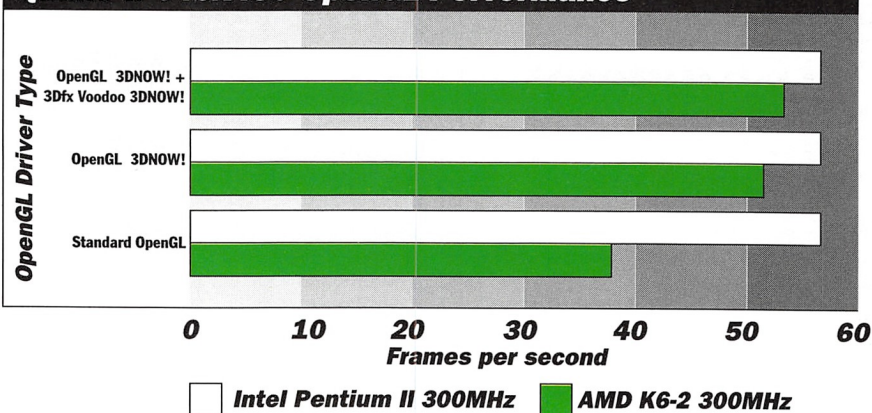
There has been significant scientific research performed to see just how many frames per second are required for the human eye to be able to perceive them as moving image. It was found that the human eye needs around 25-30 frames per second for the illusion of fluid motion.

Why are we all shouting about the fact that we can run Quake II at 50 frames per second when 30 frames per second is sufficient? And why do we need 3D accelerators that can pump out 100 frames per second? Well we don't really, the benchmark scores we got for the K6-2 300MHz system are enough to play all current games quite comfortably. The benchmark results that we publish are simply to ascertain the fastest accelerator and system combination possible.

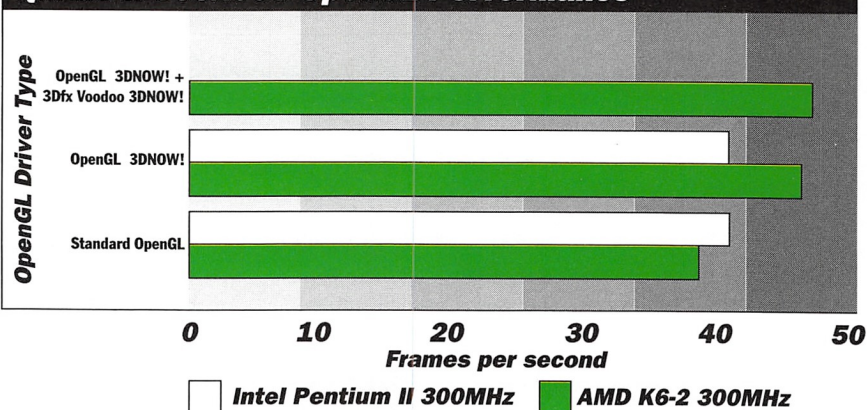
This accelerator and system combination will be able to handle the newer games that require a much higher polygon count in their objects. A system that can pump out Quake II at 50 frames per second should be able to handle Quake III: Arena when it's released and run it at a reasonable frame rate too.



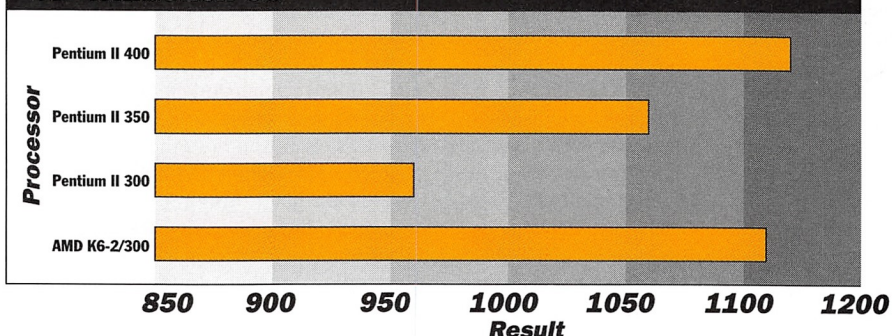
Quake II 640x480 OpenGL Performance



Quake II 800x600 OpenGL Performance



3D Winbench 98



Cache this then!

The table below shows the theoretical throughput of these 3DNow! instructions.

Processor	Theoretical Throughput (Floating point Operations Per Second)
Pentium II @ 400MHz	0.4 Billion FLOPS
AMD K6-2 @ 333MHz	1.333 Billion FLOPS

I say theoretical, as the real world performance of a K6-2 is not really more than three times the speed of a Pentium II 400. Benchmark results for the K6-2 have been very good but the higher end Pentium II's are certainly not that far behind. The Pentium II's Level 2 cache is one of the main reasons that the K6-2 will perform slower than a Pentium II as the overall processor speed increases.

Processor Speed	266	300	350	400	450	500
K6-2 L2 cache speed	66	100	100	100	100	100
P II L2 cache speed	133	150	175	200	225	250

The K6-2 gains quite a significant speed increase when it moves to the 100MHz-system bus speed. The Pentium II on the other hand always receives an increase in its L2 cache speed as you increase the CPU frequency. At 500MHz the L2 cache will be running at a ridiculous 250MHz whereas a 500MHz K6-2 will still only run its level 2 cache at 100MHz. The K6-3 will be AMD's answer to this problem by including 256KBytes of cache on the K6-2 core itself the K6-3 will be able to run its level 2 cache at clock speed. The Level 2 cache that is found on all Socket7 boards will then become Level 3 cache, expect the K6-3 to really fly.

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CPU: Future Look

The CPUs which will power 1999's games.

We now have the mighty Pentium II 400 and AMD K6-2 but what's in store for us in the near future? The processor that most gamers should be hanging out for is Intel's Katmai processor. Katmai will include Intel's answer to '3DNOW!' known as KNI (Katmai New Instructions). These new instructions will hopefully provide us with a way to combat the CPU to 3D-card bottleneck that is currently plaguing the next generation 3D cards.

Next-gen CPU power

What other CPU's are on the horizon? This is truly a golden age of microprocessor advances, here's a rundown of what's coming your way.

Intel

Recently, Intel finally unveiled the long awaited Pentium Pro overdrive CPU. This Socket8 compatible chip will run at either 300 or 333MHz and basically is a Pentium II Xeon, as this processor will run the level 2 cache at core speed.

It will be expensive, for many users it could be cheaper to upgrade the motherboard and processor to a Pentium II. In the next few months Intel will release three new processors, the Pentium II 450MHz and two new Celeron variants code-named 'Mendocino'. These two new versions of the Celeron will include 128KByte of Level 2 cache. Unlike the older 266-300MHz Celeron's which had no level 2 cache at all. These new breeds of

Celeron will come in 300 and 333MHz variants with faster versions to follow.

Later in the first quarter of 99 we will finally see the much-anticipated Katmai processor initially at 450 and 500MHz. After this Intel has plans to release processors that are currently go by the names of Coppermine, Tanner, Cascades and Merced. The Coppermine processor is expected to be released at around 533MHz sometime in first half of 1999. Coppermine should be built using Intel's new 0.18 micron process, with 600+ MHz versions to follow. Little is known about Tanner and Cascades, but it is believed that Cascades will have 256Kbyte on-die Level 2 cache running at processor speed. This will be Intel's final departure from the old 32bit instruction set (IA32) to what it calls IA64, which will be Intel's first full 64Bit CPU. Merced

will also depart from the regular RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computing) or CISC (Complex Instruction Set Computing) processor architecture to something called EPIC. EPIC (Explicitly Parallel Instruction Computing) will be a very complex undertaking and it still waits to be seen whether Intel will be able to pull this off.

AMD

'3DNOW!' has provided Intel with something to take seriously. Why do you think they are releasing a new Celeron variant so soon after the first ones?

The next processor after the K6-2 will be the K6-3 (a.k.a. K6+3D). The K6-3 will include 256Kbyte of on chip level 2 cache that will run at core speed. This processor will still use socket7 motherboards and will address the level 2 cache found on these motherboards as level 3 cache. Both the K6 and the K6-2 receive an enormous speed boost when the current motherboard level 2 cache is increased from the old 66MHz to the Super7 spec of 100MHz.

In 1999 AMD plan to release the K7 processor, which will finally move AMD away from the Socket7 motherboards. AMD plan

Date	Company	Processor
Q3 1998	Intel	Pentium II 450MHz
		Pentium II XEON 450MHz
		Celeron 'Mendocino' 300,333MHz Slot1
	AMD	K6-2 350MHz '3DNOW!'
	Cyrix	6x86MX PR350
	IDT	Winchip2 C6 300MHz '3DNOW!'
Q4 1998	Intel	Pentium II 450MHz
	AMD	K6-2 400MHz '3DNOW!'
	Cyrix	6x86MX PR400
	IDT	MXi 'Cayenne' PR400 '3DNOW!'
Q1 1999	Intel	Katmai 450MHz 'KNI'
		Celeron 'Mendocino' 366 Slot1
		Celeron 'Mendocino' 300-366 Socketed
	AMD	K6-3
Q2 1999	Intel	Tanner 500MHz+
	AMD	K7 'SlotA'
	Cyrix	MIII 'Jalapeno' PR500
2H 1999 and beyond	Intel	Cascades 600MHz+
		Coppermine 533MHz+
		Merced 'SlotM'



to use a socket very similar to Slot1 mechanically. The only difference will be electrically, that is, it will not support Intel's Slot1 bus protocols. Instead AMD will utilise Digital's ALPHA processors EV6 bus protocol.

Cyrix

Soon Cyrix plan to release their MXi processor based on the Cayenne core.

Cayenne will include an improved floating-point unit and also will include '3DNOW!'

After the MXi Cyrix will unveil processors based on its Jalapeno core. Little is known about this except for the fact that it will also include support for '3DNOW!'

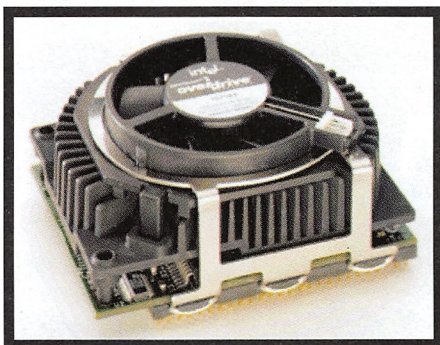
And the others...

IDT and their Winchip are not really known to well in this country, the processors are available but are not often included in computer systems. The Winchip processors are very cheap and it shows they really don't offer the gamer any advantage at all and are not even as fast as a old Pentium MMX CPU. What is interesting though is that IDT plan to release a version of their processor called Winchip-2 which will feature an improved floating point unit and '3DNOW!' instructions.

Another yet unknown Silicon Valley Startup Company called Rise is very soon to debut their entry into the x86 arena known as the mP6. The mP6 will be a socket7 chip that should be as fast as a similarly clocked Pentium II. Whether Rise pull this off still waits to be seen.

Gary Wallis

(bottom) Intel's Overdrive, & (top) Turok 2, to help with upgrade motivation



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Photo: Jason Davis

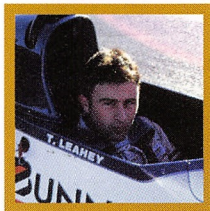
VIEW FROM THE DRIVER'S SEAT

The Reality Test

Take one Formula Ford driver and let him loose with the newest sims. Take one hardcore sim fanatic and give him a drive in a Formula Ford car.

Formula Ford driver: Tim Leahey
Simboy: Ben Mansill

The Real Racer



Tim Leahey

Believe me, it's a very challenging exercise to sit down in front of a computer game and then try to explain how close or far it is to the real thing.

In the most basic terms, Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix, Colin McRae Rally and TOCA Touring Car Championship do a good job of simulating a racecar and all of the basic handling characteristics are there.

But the reality is none of them would prepare someone to jump straight into a Formula Ford for a race at Oran Park, for example (yeah, thanks Tim. Ed).

The reality of realism

Taking Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix as perhaps the closest of the three titles I tested to actually racing a Formula Ford, the basics like understeer and oversteer are simulated fairly well. After a couple of observation laps struggling with understeer I made a few set-up changes that would have worked on my Formula Ford and, Hey Presto! My lap times improved.

But that's where the comparisons end. Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix, Colin McRae Rally and TOCA all look fantastic, but do they

'feel' like real racing? Not quite!

The fundamental difference is what I call the "Fear factor". Nothing a computer screen can do will prepare someone for driving at 220 km/h down Conrod Straight at Bathurst nose-to-tail with another competitor. It's that three-dimensional, 360 degrees sensation of speed that no computer game could ever deliver.

That's not supposed to be a criticism of these three titles in particular. It's merely a statement that they are, first and foremost, games and that the real thing is - well - the real thing.

The skill game

The bottom line though is that the difference between a great racing driver and someone who is merely good is having the courage

to brake half a second later even though your common sense tells you to 'throw out the anchors'. Overcoming your doubts and fears is all part of the skill of racing.

There are other details that are missing from every computer or arcade game I've ever seen.

Body roll and handling dynamics are the most obvious elements lacking from the three games even though TOCA, for example, has a pretty good attempt at simulating the appearance of body roll.

Body roll on a real race car and the 'give' in the tyres certainly affect how I'd take a corner, and positioning your own body a certain way within the car can also change the weight distribution which you can use to your advantage.

Computer games don't simulate the sense of sideways movement that can occur when a car is beginning to slide either, or the G-forces on your body while cornering, both of which are a significant part of the experience of racing a car.

Force Feedback

Another factor missing is the feedback that a racecar gives you through the steering wheel



in terms of vibration and 'give' in the tyres. Without these it's much harder to find the absolute limits of a car which is one of the core parts of what is known in motorsport as "race craft". Actually, given how far racing games have come in the last 10 years, it wouldn't surprise me if the computer game designers are already looking at doing something about this.

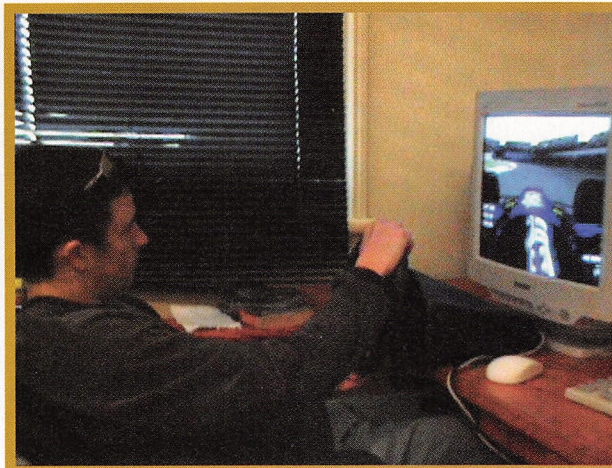
If playing these games isn't much value in preparing a novice for driving a racecar they do, however, have some value for a racing driver in learning a circuit, especially in the case of Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix and TOCA. Obviously they are of limited value in setting up a racecar but you could use either for circuit layout knowledge in terms of "well, I've just come out of this slight right-hander so I should expect a tight left in about a hundred metres or so".

In fact, I used Formula One 97 to learn Albert Park (Melbourne) before I raced there in March earlier this year!

Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix Midas

This is certainly a fantastic game and, as a simulator, probably comes closest to delivering something that approaches realism.

The graphics in particular are probably the smoothest of the three games I looked at, even if it's not exactly like the real thing. The sound is also very realistic, and I have to admit I was impressed with the set-up options, though they are a bit basic compared



to the real thing.

Driving-wise, most of the tricks that work on the track in a Formula Ford work in the game so I suppose that says as much as anything about how close it comes to racing an open-wheeler.

BIO TIM LEAHEY

Born: 14 April 1975

Home town: Orange (NSW)

One of the finest drivers coming through Australian motorsport's junior ranks, Tim Leahey has gone from strength to strength in 1998, finishing third overall in the nation's top junior motor racing series, the Australian Formula Ford Championship.

Like most prospective motor racers, Tim Leahey commenced his career racing Karts, winning the 1995 Formula 100 South Pacific Championship and several rounds of the CIK Australian Kart Championship in International A-class.

Graduating to Formula Ford in 1997, Leahey consistently finished in the top 10 before joining the championship winning Fastlane team for the 1998 championship.

With a creditable podium result in the Australian Formula Ford Championship under his belt, Tim Leahey is now exploring options for a career in professional motorsport, which may see him in an open-wheeler or a Ford Falcon V8 Supercar in 1999.

1998 Car: Van Diemen RF98

Sponsors: Tony Leahey Ford, Bunnings Warehouse

1998 Australian Formula Ford Championship (final placement): 3rd
1998 highlights:

Australian Formula Ford Championship

3rd round 2: Lakeside, Race 2

3rd round 3: Phillip Island, Race 2

2nd round 6: Warreroo, Race 1

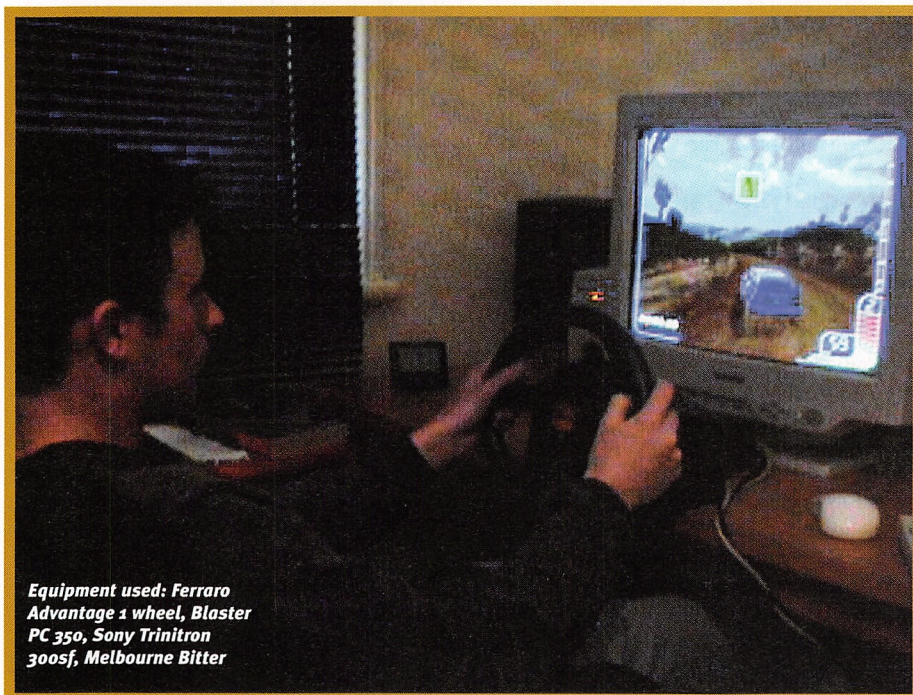
3rd round 6: Warreroo, Race 2

1st round 7: Calder Park, Race 1

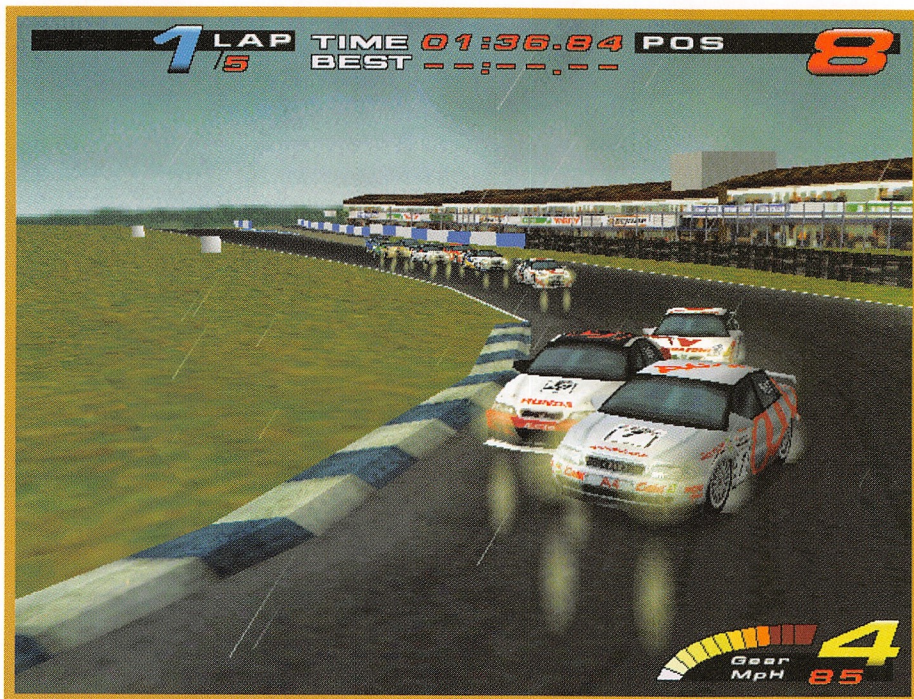
3rd round 7: Calder Park, Race 2

2nd round 8: Oran Park, Race 1

1st (declared) round 8: Oran Park, Race 2



Equipment used: Ferraro Advantage 1 wheel, Blaster PC 350, Sony Trinitron 300sf, Melbourne Bitter



Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix is also fairly unforgiving, like a real race car, perhaps even more so because you can't feel the car sliding until it's too late to do anything about it.

It's only weaknesses from a realism per-

spective are that it doesn't take into account some of the real race car dynamics that are affected by reaction times and body coordination (as opposed to hand-eye coordination). That said, this criticism could be applied to every driving game I've seen so far.

Colin McRae Rally Codemasters

I'm not a rally buff so maybe I'm not the ideal person to ask about Colin McRae Rally, but I got the impression that it lacked the

realistic feel of the other two games.

The crashes felt a bit strange and it seemed to me that the car was perhaps a little too easy to control, given how difficult the real thing looks on television.

If Colin McRae Rally has one thing its favour, then it's simply that it's a lot of fun and it's certainly easier to get the hang of compared to Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix. It's probably also the closest that I'll ever get to driving a real rally car.

TOCA Touring Car Codemasters

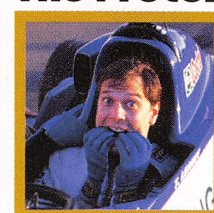
TOCA Touring Car is a very enjoyable game and it doesn't do too badly in the realism department either. It may not be the newest of the three titles I test drove, but in my opinion it stacks up well against the others, and when all is said and done it's probably my favourite game even though it doesn't have a famous driver's name on the box.

A couple of months ago I had a drive of Jason Bright's Ford Falcon V8 Supercar at Calder as part of Ford's Generation XR young drivers program, so I have a pretty good idea on how a Touring Car should feel. TOCA does a great job of simulating at least some of the roll dynamics of a Touring Car.

In terms of realism in handling and dri-

ving it probably falls somewhere between Colin McRae Rally and Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix, and because there are so many other cars on the track at any one time it's probably the most fun as well.

The Pretender



Ben Mansill

With Tim having appraised the simulations, it was my turn to taste the real thing. The point was for me (the most fanatical racing gamer I know - and

besides, was I about to give a free ride in a Formula Ford away when it was there for the taking? I don't think so!) to try the real thing and compare the experience to the sims I'd been playing for years.

Being there

No matter how realistic the programmers make a sim, as Tim stressed, you're not there in the cockpit, with the seat of your pants telling you how close to the edge of the envelope you are. Force Feedback technology will go some way towards fixing this, but it will be at least a while before Force Feedback technology gives truly intuitive information, as opposed to a bit of novel bump and shudder.

Style points

"Just grab my spare suit and get changed in the truck" said Tim, pointing toward the impressive looking transport that was probably bought from an International Rescue closing down sale. "Cool!", I thought, leaping up the stairs. Inside were several crew who didn't look like they were going anywhere in a hurry, and a racing suit a few sizes too small for me. With the most inelegant display of a one human being getting undressed in front of many behind me, it was time for action!

Forget all that crap about intuitive feedback. The number 1 difference between PC racing and the real thing is comfort. The 6-point racing harness seriously threatened any future plans for fatherhood I may have had, while the shoes (blue suede!) were just a thin skin of leather that squeezed my toes and general foot shape into the smallest size possible. You can't move. At all. The little thumb-sized H-gate shifter was just a couple of inches to the right of the wheel, you don't really consciously reach for it to change gears, you just sort of think it and it happens.

Down below in the footwell, which is precisely the width of two tightly bound feet, are the three pedals - each about as wide as two fingers. The brake pedal is raised slightly.

It's really happening!

"OK, punch the button and give it some juice". Tim was pointing at the huge red knob with "Start" on it. Hey wow! This was real and

Tim's Race Rating

JOHNNY HERBERT'S GRAND PRIX

(ratings are out of five stars)

Realism/Handling	★★★
Graphics	★★★★
Sound	★★★★
Fun	★★★

OVERALL ★★★

COLIN McRAE RALLY

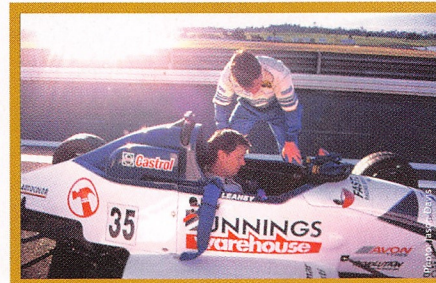
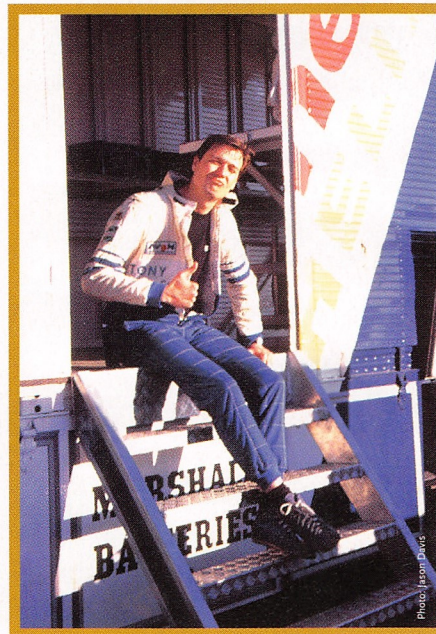
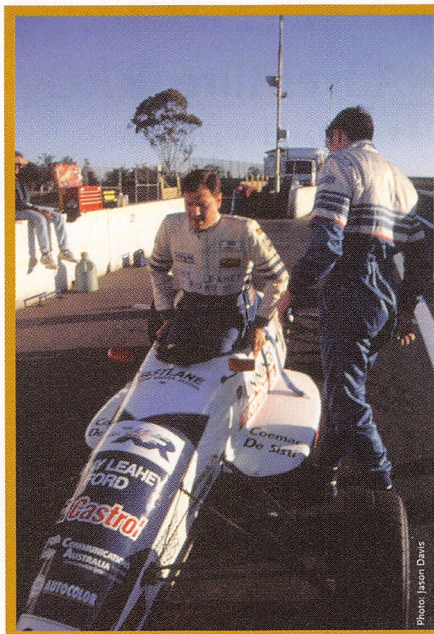
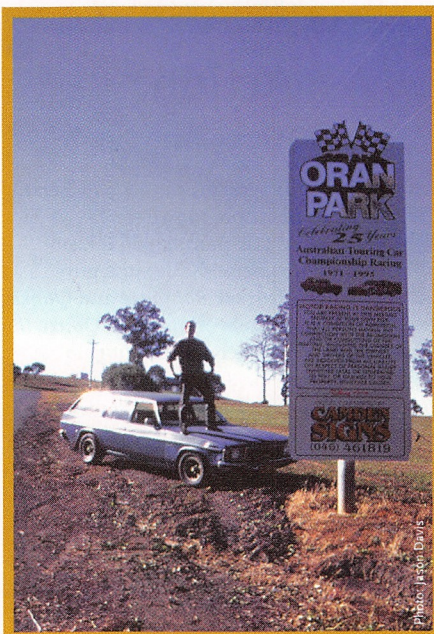
Realism/Handling	★★
Graphics	★★★
Sound	★★★★
Fun	★★★★

OVERALL ★★★

TOCA TOURING CAR

Realism/Handling	★★★
Graphics	★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Fun	★★★★

OVERALL ★★★



just a bit exciting. It was just like I'd imagined/fantasized. Hit the button and you get the Channel 9 F1 intro sound - that high-pitched whine of the starter, then it's all engine. Sweet, loud, vibrating and only a few inches behind my head. It was a life-highlight.

I had only two real fears - that I'd stall coming out of the pits, and that I'd crash and die in a fireball. Make that only one fear, for by some miracle I managed to roll smoothly out. Hooray! I'm a racing car driver!

Confidence was high

The first lap I took easy, just getting a feel for the gears (no synchro, so timing the changes was the key to avoiding ugly crunching, grinding noises). Confidence was high. This was surprisingly easy! Ok, second lap, I know what's going on here, piece of piss, let's go hard. Into the straight, through the gears, the surging acceleration, the noise, the vibration, damn this is good. Flat out on the straight, sharp left-hander looming. I knew the braking point from watching the lads practise before I had my turn. Playing it very safe, I started braking and down-shifting well before I thought I had to, the line

I'd take clearly visualized in my mind. Everything is going so well!

Like a record, baby

The laws of physics conspired against me. What was going on right here in reality bore little resemblance to my mental image of the perfect corner I was going to take. I sort of half made it through the corner...

Several impressions simultaneously came upon me: I was going way too fast, I was definitely not going to stay on the track, there was nothing much I could do about it, things were blurry and asphalt-gray, things were blurry and dusty brown, I spinning - how many times I'll never know, things were blurry and grass-green, Tim was going to kill me.

Tim thought it was very funny. This I gathered from the way he laughed at me when they had to drive out and rescue me after I grounded the underbody on the kerb trying to get back on the track. Great.

Another dozen uneventful but much smoother laps later and it was all over, most unfortunately. This I could do all day! My god what fun! It's magic. But is it anything like PC sims? Well, the spin was... Aside from a

sense of imminent painful death, the sudden loss of control (and style) was just like a proper sim. The graphics out there in reality aren't that far ahead of accelerated 3D either.

Verdict

Only Johnny Herbert's GP comes close in feel. Rushing home to play it and keep the magic feeling alive, I was instantly a whole lot better at it as a result of my real experience. I knew what was going on.

More than anything else, I was amazed at how the limitations of a fixed, forward looking monitor view were just non-existent. In the car you can't really move your head, you don't look around, it's all in the mirrors and a sense of knowing where other cars are around you. This was very pleasing indeed. What you see on the monitor is pretty much how it is. Perhaps in Touring Cars they can look around a bit more, but in a single seat open-wheeler it's just a fixed, forward looking letterbox view.

On the whole though, sims can only come so close. For most of us though, it's as close as we'll get. It's also close enough. These new sims are infinitely better than those of just a couple of years ago. It's about skill though, and whether a sim is real or not, it'll still take a measure of skill to master. That's why we play them.



STAY PUT

The real
"coming soon"
games.

Adventure/RPG

David Wildgoose

Few games can rival *Ultima* in terms of its fanatical following. For that reason, even fewer have stirred up such passionate debate while still months away from release. The new graphical look of *Ultima IX* as well as several design ideas have outraged many Britannian veterans. Not to mention the fact that the recent departure of some core production team members has sparked predictable and perhaps not unwarranted speculation that the whole project was heading for disaster. In July, Lord British issued a statement to illustrate his philosophy towards *Ultima* and the direction in which *Ascension* was taking the series (<http://www.ultimaascension.com>).

I have to say that I agree with almost all



of the points he made. The alleged "dumbing down" or Tomb Raider-isation of *UIX* levelled at Origin by their critics has always struck me as wilfully narrow-minded. A few months back I urged you to resist equating 3D graphics with "action game". Everything I've read so far has only reassured me that Origin have recognised the falsity of this equation as well. It is certainly possible to perform many actions in a 3D game, including combat, jumping, running, climbing, etc, without needing to rely upon your own reflexes to achieve success. In the combat-heavy world of role-playing games, the *Ultima* series has consistently stood apart from its colleagues by emphasising the world they have created and the story they wish to tell. At this stage, *UIX* looks set to continue this tradition.

For me, the lack of a permanent party is a plus. Surely it's better to have Iolo as a real person, as a genuine inhabitant of Britannia instead of merely trailing behind you all game to add some extra biff in combat. This was the way the series had been heading. Check Iolo's progress from anonymous extra in *U4* to minor speaking role in *U7* ("Food!") for confirmation. And anyway, for the final part of the trilogy of trilogies, I reckon it's appropriate for the Avatar to go it alone against the Guardian - this time it's personal, you know?

Ultima Ascension is perhaps the bravest and most ambitious game ever. My sneaking suspicion is that it could well be the best, too.

Action

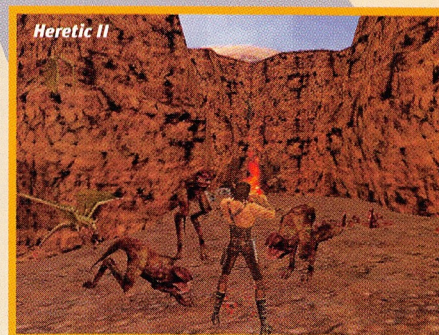
George Argy

Current *Quake II* version: 3.17 (& 3.18 Beta)
Current *Unreal* version: 2.09

Tons of news this month, so I'll keep each tidbit concise. Xatrix (the guys that developed *Redneck Rampage* and *Quake II: The Reckoning*) are working on a *Quake II* engine game, tentatively called 'Kingpin'. It will be an Al Capone gangster-style game set in the 1930's and will feature player controlled vehicles.

Raven are also working on a *Quake II* engine game entitled *Soldier of Fortune* which will be based on the popular war-magazine of the same name. It will be hardware only, so forget about *Deer Hunter* and start saving for a 3D card.

For those of you who loved *Incoming* (and



there aren't many of you), a mission pack is underway called *Subversion* which will add new enemies, 48 new missions and new worlds to explore. Like *Incoming*, it may provide you with a full two minutes of quality gameplay.

For those of you who have not tried the *Sin* CD demo yet: do it now! First impressions are that *Sin* is going to absolutely kick ass with its attention to detail and (relatively) modern-day gameplay. Even better is the news that an expansion pack is in the pipeline, even though at the time of this writing the full version is still unavailable! It will be developed by 2015, Inc. and feature 13 new levels, new storyline, enemies and weapons and an even nuder Elexis.

In driving/destruction game news, *Interstate '82*, the sequel to *Interstate '76* is getting even closer and is looking fantastic. The game will be hardware only but will feature larger environments and the ability to exit your car and car-jack your opponents - very LA! Also, *Carmageddon II* looks set to rock your world twice as hard if you're a fan of the original. This time the game is fully 3D with no bitmaps, so that when you hit a pedestrian his/her body parts fly apart with correct physical trajectories, which is obviously very important.

Even more briefly than the above: *Heretic II* will definitely be 3rd-person only; *Mac Unreal* has gone gold and there are concrete plans for a Solaris and Linux port for the *Unreal* dedicated server; there's a Lara Croft image gallery at <http://www.gamespot.co.uk/pix/1998/08/1003.html>.

Strategy

Peter Sharpe

Hot news flash! The soon to be released Falcon 4.0 is to be included free with copies of Mr Potato Head the computer game! A slightly exaggerated scenario but in a world where giant American toy maker Hasbro purchased cash strapped Microprose, who knows what oddities we might see on software shelves down the road. I'm already looking forward to my copy of Mechcommander Monopoly. Be afraid, very afraid...

Total Annihilation players have lived with the fact that the skirmish mode AI has well... let's say been easily compared at times with a lobotomized chicken. With Cavedog concentrating on TA sequels at the moment, the quest of smartening the AI up a bit has been taken up by fans handy with the arcane world



of programming. Head over to the TA Design Division at <http://tadd.annihilated.org/> for the "unofficial" patch to let the computer unleash some brains as well as nukes in skirmish mode. Also available for download from this site are some "also unofficial" TA units that are of top notch quality. They're well designed without an ill thought out cloaking heavily armoured flying Bertha Gun in sight.

Talk turn based strategy, and Talonsoft won't be too far from peoples lips. Responsible for some cracking **Civil War** games, the soon to be here **Operational Art of War** is shaping up as possibly the most comprehensive wargame ever. The **Steel Panthers** series was great, but how about the ability to edit and play out any battle scenario between 1935 and 1955 including infantry, armour and atomic weapons! Korea, The Invasion of Normandy, Stalingrad... Wives and girlfriends of wargamers, accept PowerPlay's condolences for the lonely weeks ahead. Demo available from www.talonsoft.com.

The time approaches. **C&C2 Tiberian Sun** soon cometh. We're excited, you're excited and you can bet software retailers are excited. While it's nice to know gameplay elements are shaping up well, the big news has got to be the inclusion of James Earl Jones (Darth Vader's voice and number one screen presence in ANY movie the guy appears in) as GDI chief commander. Potential Homer Simpson drool worthy rating just went up a notch, excellent casting choice Westwood. In addition Michael Biehn (Hicks from Aliens) is in as well, that's nice.

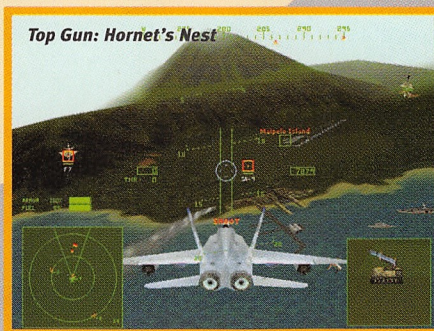
Sims

Maj. Ian Lindgren

I've been singing the praises of Empire's **Apache Havoc** for the past few months. Wait no longer, it should be on the shelves by mid October, so look out for it!

I heard a rumour this month that MicroProse were thinking of cancelling **Gunship III**. But a quick check with MicroProse proved this rumour to be untrue; the game remains on track for release in Australia around April 1999. So don't dispose of your copies of **M1 Tank Platoon II** when you have played it to death! Keep it in the "must have" spot on the game shelf because it will integrate with **Gunship III** and you'll be able to fight a combined arms battle with a friend.

Further news from MicroProse indicates



that both **Falcon 4.0** and **Top Gun: Hornet's Nest** are showing November release dates. For Hornet's Nest, this probably translates to a Christmas release in Australia. I've just received the latest info on it, and believe me "Maverick is back and kicking butt!" Rich graphics, a humorous script, and 30 missions in three theatres with easy to manage controls should make it a big ticket Christmas item.

The big news this month is the October surprise release of **Total Air War (TAW)**, the sequel to F22 ADF. TAW sports 22,000 targets, over 5,000 cities and towns, plus more than 300 airfields. It has Pentium II AGP support and enhanced graphics that look hot! TAW also has a unique "Scramble" feature to keep players alert during campaigns; I'm not sure what this means yet, but it sounds exciting. I can just imagine lining up to land after a stressful mission then receiving a vector to a high speed inbound bogey 15 miles away!

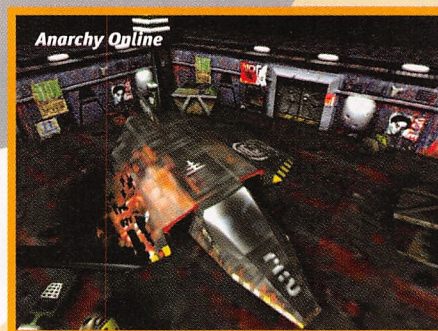
Hot off the press is news that Sierra will release **World War 1 Aces** and **Pro Pilot 99** in October, and **Red Baron 3D** in November.

Also hot off the press is news thatSSI are developing **Silent Hunter 2** for release mid 99; if I'm not mistaken, that will be the first sub sim since Jane's 688i. Lastly, F15 pilots should check out the latest **Jane's F15** patch at www.janes.ea.com.

Online

Gareth Jones

Every **Ultima Online** player in Australia, New Zealand and Asia will have been hoping and praying for a local server. And the news, finally is that we're going to get one. Well, at least sort of. The server will be based in Japan, but at least it should be less congested and with less lag than the US servers. Part of the reason for this long awaited announcement was the news from OSI of the second coming. Adding a completely new continent for play (which won't be compatible with Britannia players), as well as some new monsters and the odd update or two, UO: The Second Age will be on sale sometime late this year for a full retail price (with a printed manual and maps, and a free month of play), though existing UO account holders will be



able to download an update for \$19.95. A monthly fee will still be charged, and there are no details on when the Japanese server will be up.

If it sounds a little too rich for your blood, then it might be worth your while to check out some of the Java-based games available on the web for free. One of the standouts has to be Marbelous, a Bust-A-Move clone with multiplayer capabilities- check out www.ikasths.dk/usr/da72/da72032/Marbleous. If that's not quite your style, then how about a Java port of the legendary SNES RPG Zelda? I couldn't actually get my version to work, but to give it a try yourself head to www.snesgx.com/sec/roms/java.htm.

As fun as they are, the real meat of online games is still in huge scale RPG's, and there are more than a couple of UO style affairs in production. Some of the best looking and most promising so far include Anarchy Online (www.funcom.com), and The Fourth Coming (www.the4thcoming.com). AO takes a slightly different path to many RPG's (online or otherwise) being set in a world thousands of years into the future, and for anyone getting a little sick of slaying Orcish hordes and saying "thee" and "thou" all the time, it might be a breath of fresh air. The Fourth Coming takes a more traditional line, but it focusses upon the human civilisation as nasty creatures try to take over. Both look very impressive, but the devil of large scale internet play has to be dealt with by both if they are to succeed.

SIN

Much awaited, long anticipated and almost here. Sin is urban combat to die for.

Category 1st person shooter
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Ritual/Activision
Available October

The recent and highly successful launch of the Sin demo has dispelled any doubts about the game's ability to compete with visually and technologically superior titles like Unreal. The generous people at Activision gave me an exclusive preview of Sin as it entered its final stages of development, so here's the latest on a game that may prove to be one of the best First Person Shooters yet.

THE STORY

Unlike most First Person Shooters, Sin's plot is both plausible and compelling. In 2087, the

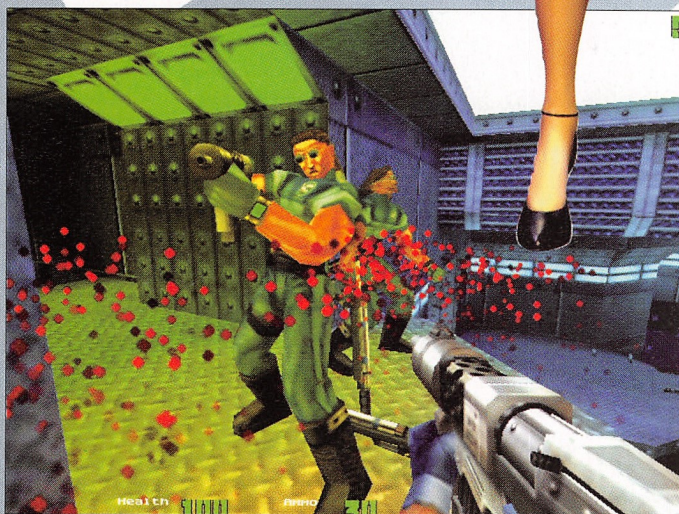
city of Freeport passed legislation that sanctioned the establishment of private Security Forces (Sec-Forces) by eminent corporations. With violence and organised crime escalating to uncontrollable levels, it was hoped that these Sec-Forces would work in tandem with law enforcement agencies and restore order to the crime-ridden

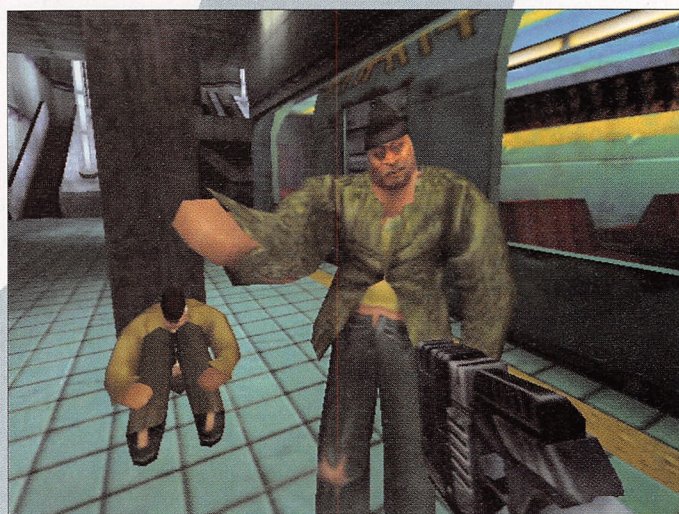
city. Fast forward a decade to the present year of 2097 (what is it with game developers and that year?) and the gamble seems to have paid off.

Unfortunately for the city's inhabitants, the period of relative peace and harmony has been rather short lived. Addicts of the infamous U4 narcotic are succumbing to some very disturbing side effects. These side effects range in severity from bouts of acute paranoia to hideous genetic mutations, with the latter becoming increasingly prevalent. The horrific mutations constitute a dire threat to the human species and Freeport's government responds swiftly.

Colonel John Blade is tasked

with investigating the circumstances surrounding the unexplained phenomenon. Blade is commander and owner of **HARDCORPS**; Freeport's premiere Sec-Force. In the course of his investigation, he crosses paths with the alluring Elexis Sinclair, a brilliant biochemist who intends to improve the human species through genetic manipulation. On the surface, an admirable pursuit. It later transpires that Elexis has made Freeport's U4 addicts her unwilling guinea pigs by combining





Along with the forthcoming *Half-Life*, *Sin* is the Quake II engine's last hurrah

U4 with an experimental serum. The player squeezes into the carbon-composite-toed combat boots of Blade and must stop Sinclair at all costs.



THE GAME

One of the major complaints voiced about Quake 2 had to do with the lack of interactivity within each environment. After playing Duke Nukem 3D; a game where anything and everything could be opened, shut, blown up or manipulated, Quake 2's static environments almost seemed like a step back in gameplay quality. *Sin* utilises a heavily modified version of id Software's Quake 2 engine, but Ritual have made some major enhancements and created environments that make Duke Nukem 3D's seem decidedly archaic in comparison.



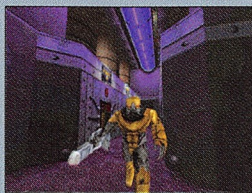
Total interactivity

Ritual's developers have decided that every object within each environment will be interactive; even if only to the extent that it can be riddled with bullets or charred with explosions. In essence, practically everything within a level can be destroyed. Windows can be shattered, walls cratered and furniture shredded. Shooting out a light causes glass to shower the floor and the surrounding area to darken. And shooting a sign above an enemy's head may cause it to fall and knock him out. To further compound the almost ridiculous levels of environmental interactivity, it's possible to find something like a coin, put it in a pay phone, and call a hotline for the latest movie information. There are also objects like computer terminals and ATM's that can be accessed and used in the same fashion as their real life counterparts. And if you think that's incredible, objects destroyed in one level may affect the progression of the game in future levels!

With over 20 enormous levels promised, players won't be finishing the game in a weekend either. Ritual have incorporated a



system whereby players can complete every level in several different ways, thus dramatically increasing Sin's longterm value. Ritual CEO Harry Miller claims that, while the ending of the game remains the same, players can go through the game ten times and find that things have changed on each and every level, every time.



Fresh new weapons

Similarities between Duke Nukem 3D and Sin also extend to the types of weapons available. As in Duke, Sin's weapons tend toward the realistic rather than the fantastic end of the spec-

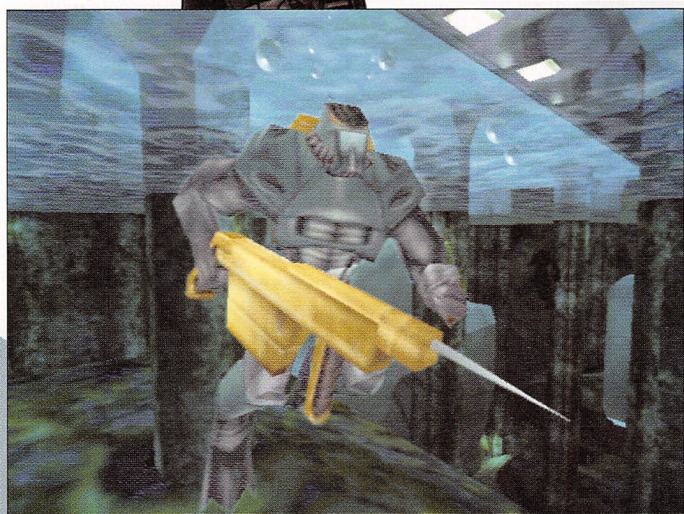
While not as pretty as Unreal, Sin does look damn nice, & being Quake II-engined, will run FAST

trum. Nevertheless, the weapons found in Sin are quite diverse and some of them are absolutely amazing. The sniper rifle, for example, is unparalleled and leaves the one in Unreal for dead! In addition to standard weapons like Uzis, shotguns and rocket

launchers, there are some futuristic weapons that are totally unique. Without saying too much, there's one weapon in particular that releases small robots that automatically scour and secure the area they're released in. Very cool. Ritual have also hinted at the inclusion of remote-detonated weapons; Duke pipe-bombers rejoice!

One of Sin's key selling points will be its unique targeting sys-

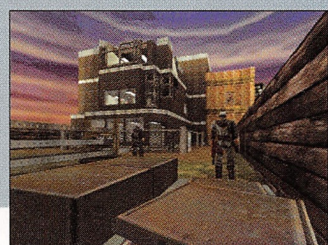




tem. Unlike competing titles, specific parts of enemies' bodies can be shot, with the appropriate areas showing damage. And, taking realism levels further still, the number of shots required to dispatch an enemy corresponds directly with the part of their body that is shot. It's possible to kill an enemy by repetitively shooting him in the leg, but it's much faster and more economical to aim for a critical area like the chest. And those with exceptionally precise aiming will be duly rewarded, as successful head shots often result in an instant kill.

Body parts

Visually, the damage modeling is spectacular. Spraying an enemy's arm with bullets will strip away his shirt sleeve and reveal torn flesh and shredded muscle below. And shooting an enemy in the head leaves a circular entry wound right between his eyes! Check out his body on the ground and you'll see that the whole back of his head has been blown off where the bullet exited. Mmmmm, skull fragments! Those that crave more gore at this point will be pleased to know that, unless you destroy them, the



Familiar urban environs to run amok in. The demo is set inside a bank, mid-city, that is surrounded by skyscrapers

bodies of vanquished foes remain where they lay for the remainder of the game. The damage modeling for corpses is identical to that used for living opponents so shooting bodies doesn't automatically turn them into gibs. Instead, with a few well-placed shots, it's possible to make quite a mess out of a bad guy's carcass!

The rest of the game's graphics look equally spectacular. It's such a relief to be rid of those god-awful brown and orange colour schemes that dominated and characterised the Quake series! The auditory experience provided by Sin is also top-quality. As the player progresses through each level, Blade makes numerous smart-ass comments that are quite entertaining.

AI to die for

Another impressive aspect of Sin is the enemy AI. Lately, it seems that every developer and his dog is singing the praises of his game's artificial intelligence. Unfortunately, such claims are often grossly inflated at best, and blatant fabrications at worst. Sin, on the other hand, seems to have gotten the enemy AI right and, many times, I've been surprised by the way enemies react to certain situations. Opponents will often call for backup or flee if they feel that they're out-gunned, and will head for cover and fire from there if they're out in the open. A refreshing change from most games where enemies head straight for the player and make no attempt to evade their fire.

Single player supremacy

The single player aspect of Sin is thoroughly engrossing

and liable to keep anyone entertained for days or weeks on end. Thankfully, Ritual haven't abandoned the multi-player side of things either; I played 6-player deathmatch sessions for several hours and, believe me, I wasn't disappointed. I found that I enjoyed Sin deathmatch a lot more than I did Quake 2 or Unreal deathmatch games, and Sin isn't even finished yet!

The impression I gained from this initial exposure to Sin is a very positive one indeed. Ritual have put an extraordinary amount of effort into their product, and for that they will be rewarded. One thing's for certain: Sin will give Half Life, Daikatana and every other First Person Shooter out there a real run for their money when it's released.

Brett Robinson



Prax War

Category 1st person shooter
Players 1-TBA
Publisher EA
Available TBA

Now is a great time to be a First Person Shooter game fan. Not only do you have the old favourites like Quake, Q2, Unreal and the like to keep you happy and glibful, there's also a swag of so-called 'third generation' titles in development, and nearing completion. One that comes with a very high pedigree is Prax War, developed by 'Rebel Boat Rocker'.

The game itself is being built with a proprietary engine, which (as per usual) is said to be the best there is, more versatile and capable than anything else out

there. Prax War will require a 3D card, though of course to get the best out of the game you'll probably need a fairly high-end system. The payoff would seem to be quite impressive though,



The continuing development of the FPS genre is great news for fans - there's plenty of life left yet!



And yes, that is baddies rather than aliens. The game is set on Earth, and RBR don't want alien hordes attack-

ing us, as they feel that it's something that's already been done to death. Prax War will also feature 5 man 'teams' working together, though it seems as though you will only be able to give orders to your comrades rather than take control of them yourself. With some very pretty looking screenshots, and features like the ability to jump into vehicles and take them for a spin, a very destructible environment, and a game that will be 'crazy customisable' by third parties, Prax War should be high on the 'most anticipated' list of any FPS fan. More soon.

with polygonal figures used for everything in the game and the ability for seamless segues from intro sequences to actual gameplay (a'la Sin). And most encouraging of all (for us, at least) is that the team has a definite goal to include large numbers of opponents in the same place at the same time - up to 20 baddies at the one time, for example.

S.C.A.R.S

Category Arcade Racer
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Ubisoft
Available Soon

“Like blowing things up? Like fast cars?” Well, if you do, then Ubisoft and Vivid Image think that they've got the game for you. It is very similar to Beam's upcoming DeathCarz both in terms of looks and gameplay. S.C.A.R.S. is easily much weirder though (as you might expect from a company based in France). For starters, the scenario runs something like this:

It's 3000 A.D., and humans have developed the ability to

create incredibly advanced supercomputers that gradually took control of earth, and at present there's nine left that control the entire world. Along with becoming self-determining, the supercomputers have developed emotions akin to human emotions and feelings. So, of course, they decide to create some really fast cars, kit them out with some cool weaponry and race them to the death against each other.

Thus you take on the part of one supercomputer, racing against 8 others across a variety of tracks in your car modelled upon a flesh-and-blood animal. Yes, that's

right - for unspecified (but probably very weird) reasons, these all knowing all powerful supercomputers decided to model their cars on animals like lions, bears, wolves and so on.



The premise might be totally weird, but the gameplay looks to be quite a lot of fun

With its arcade origins worn on its sleeves so prominently, it's no surprise that the game will be co-released on both the PSX and N64 at the same time as the PC version. Even so, it is a very pretty looking

game. We've only seen a 3Dfx demo version so far, but the graphics were fast, clean, and very nice. As far as gameplay goes S.C.A.R.S. is from the fun and furious arcade stable rather than an accurate sim experience, but it did seem to be bigtime fun to play, with a host of weapons, powerups and the like scattered along the track. It was also easy to pick up and play right from the start, although to master the game there is a learning curve. So there's weirdness, there's fast paced action, fun gameplay, and there's combat to boot. We still have no idea what S.C.A.R.S. stands for though...

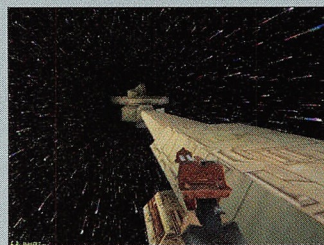


Star Trek: Klingon Honour Guard

Category 1st person shooter
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Microprose
Available Late 1998

Star Trek has become a cultural icon, whether you like the series or hate it. It wouldn't surprise me to find a peasant farmer on a backpacking journey through Uzbekistan who could converse meaningfully on the age old question of whether Picard or Kirk was the better captain, it's that pervasive. Unfortunately, for the most part, though the sci-fi series (and the spin offs) would seem to be eminently suited to a computer game conversion, none have really captured the essence of the shows and movies. A first person shooter doesn't seem to be especially well suited to the ST universe, except when you consider that it will be based around the warlike Klingons and their bloodthirsty infighting.

The scenario is that there was an assassination attempt on



Gowron, the Klingon leader, and you're given the task of finding out who was behind it and blowing the tar out of them. There will be 20-odd levels to progress through, covering areas such as space stations, starships and alien cities. One of the tenets of FPS genre games is that a variety of weapons must be available, and so the developers have had



to take a bit of license with what will be in the game - of the ten weapons available only four are from the authentic ST universe, the rest have been made up.

It does look very pretty though, as you would expect seeing as it's been created using the Unreal engine, and as with Unreal we're being promised some very advanced AI oppo-

nents - they will duck, call for reinforcements, and band together to defeat you. There will be 20 types of adversaries to face throughout the game, with an evolving plot and driven story-line. For Trekkies and non-Trekkies alike, this might be the one that really brings out the ST universe on to your computer screen. Here's hoping.

Requiem: Wrath of the Fallen

Category 1st person shooter
Players 1-8
Publisher 3DO
Available Late 1998

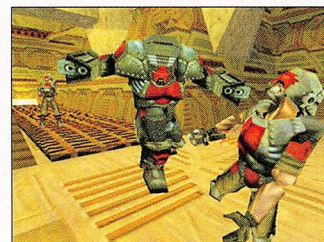
Yes folks, another FPS game with a new twist - this one promising extensive interaction with characters, spells and powers that develop as you gain experience, and a gothic old testament biblical armageddon feel to it. Sounds interesting, eh?

The storyline runs thus; as we all know, Lucifer and his minions were banished to hell by the big God dude, where they spent their time torturing those humans who were bad during their time on Earth. But after a while, that wasn't enough for Lucifer, and he directed his troops up onto the surface of the Earth so as to make it his own domain. You take the part of Malachi, an angel whose task it is to stop the demons from taking over, and to generally help out mankind.

There will be much more interaction in the game that has been



"...And I will strike down with great vengeance and furious anger those that oppose my brother..."



the standard, with fairly extensive dialogue available, and the game will be structured so that in many areas unless you bring out your weapon and start killing things/people you'll just be left alone - because you look just like an average human. However, you are of course far from an average human, for starters because you're an angel you will have magical

powers available to you, like turning enemies into pillars of salt, possessing others bodies, reanimating dead bodies, boiling opponent's blood, and more. You will still have a variety of weapons available to you to dispose of enemies in the usual ways, though.

Built with a new proprietary engine, dubbed 'Emotive Animation Technology' (EAT), Requiem's graphics look to be equable with the big upcoming and recently released titles, and there will also be native support for 3Dfx and Voodoo2 cards (along with software support). So don't discount this just because it hasn't been hyped to death pre-release; Requiem looks to have the goods for a top quality game.



Giants

Category 3D Arcade Shooter
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Planet Moon
Available Mid 1999

From the creators of MDK, minus Dave Perry, comes this intriguing action/arcade hybrid shooter-type game. That's a pretty vague description, but it will have to suffice for now, because there's scant information about the game available. The developers, Planet Moon Studios, comprised of ex-Shiny Entertainment staff, are being tight lipped about what exactly this game is, but the information they have released thus far, is interesting indeed and the game does look quite impressive.

As with MDK, it's a slightly different game to pretty much anything else, and seems to have borrowed from a few disparate genres. There are the action shoot-em-up elements (which seem to be similar to MDK), but it's not a 'lone wolf' type scenario. Instead you choose from



What's the bet that they get into a bit of trouble for their nearly nude female characters

one of three races, each with differing strengths and weaknesses. The Meccaryns are small alien soldiers from space who encase themselves in armour and have crash landed on the

planet in question. The Sea Reapers are a race of nubile indigenous female formed creatures that have been banished to the seas by their own creation, Citizen Kabuto. Kabuto was created by the Sea Reapers to defend them against an

alien threat, but he became self-aware and turned on his creators in true Frankenstein style.

As to the actual gameplay, well, that's where things tend to get a bit fuzzy at the moment - it

will be a run around and shoot the opposition type affair, though with tactical squad elements. The environment on the planet will be very destructible, so things like landslides will be a valid tactical ploy, and the small creatures on the surface will give you weapon upgrades and tech if you treat them right, though they can also be eaten for sustenance. Simply put, it looks weird and refreshingly different, and if the gameplay is up to scratch it's going to be a very good game.

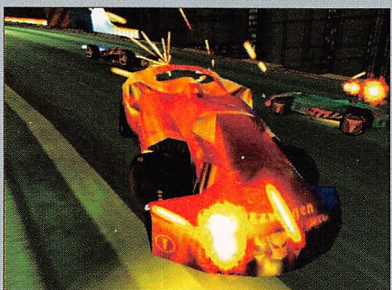
Death Karz

Category Arcade Racing
Players 1-8
Publisher Beam/Roadshow
Available TBA

Melbourne House and Beam Software's latest production is a step away from their other high profile title, KKnD. Death Karz is, as the name suggests, a fast and furious arcade style racer that seemingly owes a debt to the gameplay featured in console titles such as Mario Kart and the like (and that's not necessarily a bad thing).

It's a different game to Powerslide, the other Australian racing game in production. Both raised eyebrows and impressed many at the recent E3 show, but Deathkarz seems to be much more of a fun arcade game than a serious mechanical racing game, and though the two are likely to appeal to slightly different audiences they both look very tasty indeed. There is plenty of variety in the tracks and vehicles

on offer - 4 racing environments are available, each with three different tracks, and you will be able to choose from 13 types of cars (along with a couple of hidden vehicles) in three different classes of races.



Don't have the driving skill to overtake the leader? Then shoot him!

invisibility, and more. You'll also have a choice of two default weapons from the start, either a powerful Plasma Cannon, or a lighter and faster firing pulse laser.

Beam recognise the importance of multiplayer in games such as this, and though it doesn't look like a dedicated free server

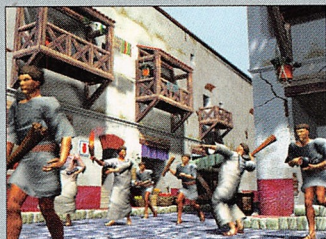
will be established for online play, all forms of multiplayer will be supported, from IPX and TCP/IP, to serial and modem to modem connections. You will need some form of 3D accelerator card to play the game though, with support built in for a native 3Dfx mode as well as Direct3D. The game isn't too far off completion now, so expect it in stores around Christmas time (maybe), and expect our full review ASAP.

Caesar III

Category Management Sim
Players 1
Publisher Sierra/Cedant/CUC
Available Late 1998

The third in the Caesar series from Sierra (or whatever it is they're calling themselves this week) looks to have the goods - it fixes the problem areas from Caesar 2 and combines SimCity style gameplay with a Civ feel, which should please the heart of any strategy sim player.

You will be offered two styles of play at start of the game, either a mission based structure with set objectives and promotion for completion, or an open ended style where you just build and build until you get bored. The Caesar series has always been a bit like Civ crossed with SimCity, and this one looks to be no different. You'll see little civilians arrive in your town or city and it's your task to make them happy by employing them, providing entertainment, sanitation, and a police force to keep them



safe. As you build up your cities you'll see the populace grow if things are going well, or the civs leaving in droves if you aren't providing as you should be.

There will be 9 types of buildings available, in the areas of administration, entertainment, education, health, industry, municipal, religion, security, and water. It's not just a case of whacking down a building where you see fit though - if you want to build a colosseum you'll have to have a lion tamers yard nearby, otherwise it'll be a waste of space, so a definite infrastructure will be required. Also, you'll have to have a variety of temples built to appease all the gods - otherwise strange accidents might



start happening to your citizens with alarming regularity.

Those who played Caesar 2 will know how lacklustre the combat system was - well, C3 should be much better. Combat will be in real time, happening on the same screen as the regular one, and you'll be able to set formations and such for your troops too. There will be three types of troops available, each with differing strengths and

We just love empire building
 simsl hours, months, and
 even years of fun, and C3
 looks to be a good one too

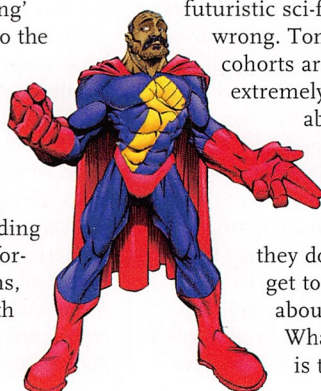
weaknesses, which should provide for some interesting tactical decisions. Let's hope that the finished product lives up to its promise - for we'll be the first to shout 'Hail Caesar !'.

Anachronox

Category 1st person shooter
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Ion Storm
Available TBA

First Person Action games are taking an interesting new direction, thankfully because the developers of top quality FPA games are those at the cutting edge of game design. They're smart enough to realise that innovation and substantial refinement are required to keep the genre healthy, and it's no surprise that the fast paced 'shoot everything' theme is giving way to the inclusion of more and more RPG and adventure-based elements.

Anachronox is the first game from Tom Hall, one of the founding members of id, also formerly from 3D Realms, and it will feature both fast paced shoot-em-up action along



with a strong storyline and character development.

Using the Quake 2 engine, Anachronox will allow you to control up to 3 characters at the same time (though in a wing-man type scenario) through a futuristic sci-fi world gone wrong. Tom Hall and his cohorts are being

extremely tight lipped about the technology and the nuts and bolts of gameplay - they don't want us to get too excited about it too early.

What we do know is that three



Anachronox: hopefully this will turn out a lot better than Ion Storm's other effort - Dominion

parts to the entire story are planned (plus an online only version), with Anachronox being the first instalment. It's a Quake 2-engined game (and there have been no announcements yet about a switch to the Unreal engine), though at the moment a third person view (a'la Tomb Raider) is the first choice, rather than the usual first person view.

As you can see, there aren't any gameplay pictures floating around just yet, so some very nice cartoon-style images will have to suffice for now. It is still relatively early in development for Anachronox, and doubtless some changes will be made as the games' development progresses. We'll keep you up to date on how the project is progressing though, rest assured.

HOMEWORLD

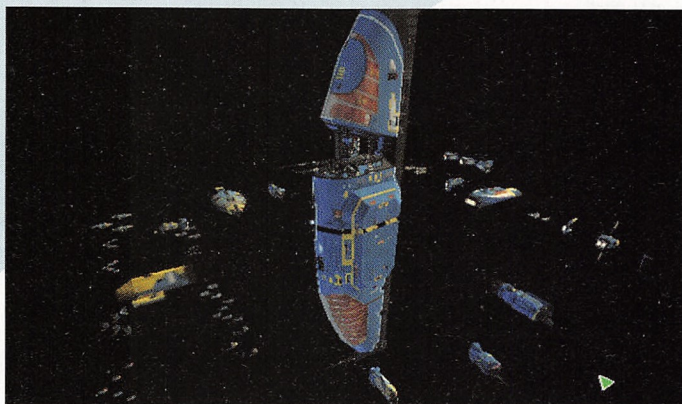
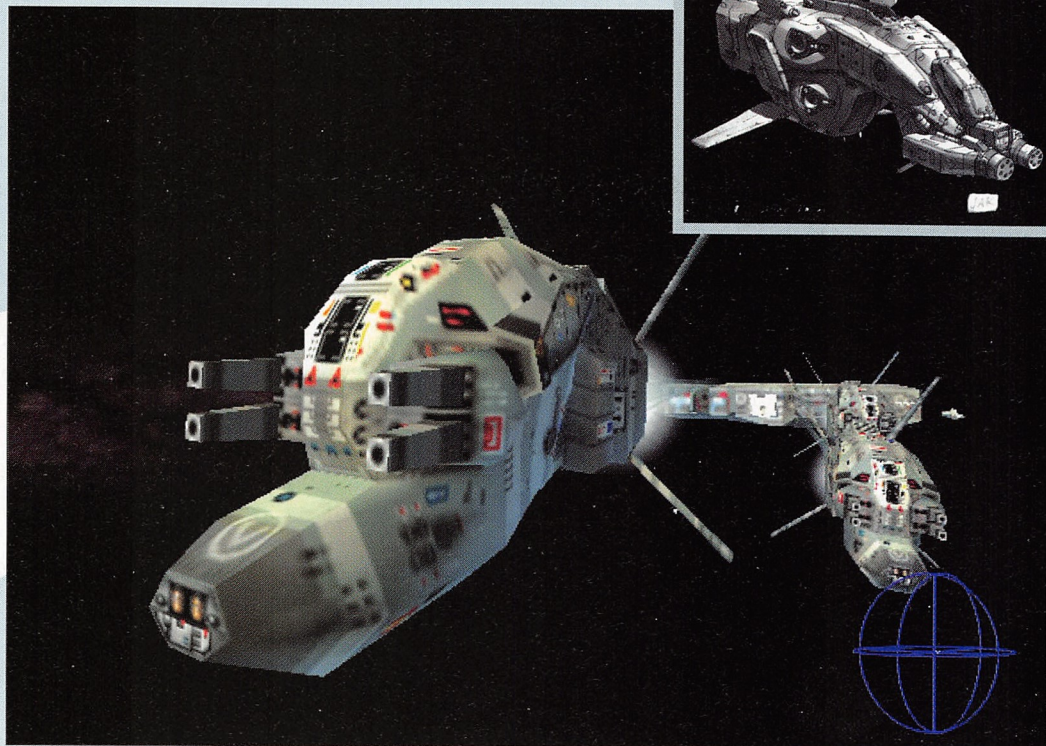
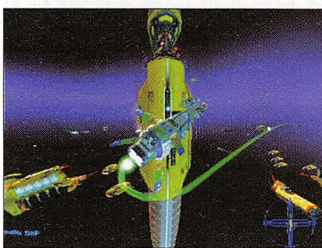
Alarm bells ring when we hear "action/strategy". Could this be the real deal?

Category Space Action/
Strategy
Players 1-8 (all forms)
Publisher Sierra/CUC/Cedant
Available Late 1998

When you think about it, why do RTS games necessarily have to be locked on land or water, or at least close to it? Why not have an RTS game set in deep space, with all the bits and bobs, all the huge ships, all the hi-res graphics, all the squad formations, and all the freedom that a truly 3D gameworld can provide? Why not indeed! It's a pretty interesting idea, eh? Well, it's an idea that Vancouver based developers Relic Entertainment had, and one that they are in the process of turning into a game by the name of Homeworld.

The storyline runs that you were once part of a master race, in control of your galaxy, eking out the centuries peacefully, full of joy and all that crap. Obviously, centuries of peace meant that your fighting capabilities had atrophied somewhat, so when invaders came, your race could do little to stem the onslaught. After a relatively short war, with your people decimated and only a few scattered groups left it was decided to head for the hills and find a planet out on the edges of the galaxy where it was safe from the rapacious invaders.

From there your society tried to put the pieces back together,



One of those ideas that makes you say "why didn't I think of that?" - an RTS in space, with all the versatility and advantages it offers

though much of your history and culture had been lost in the war. All that remained of the 'old times' was a small crystal that emitted a faint signal. After intense examination, it was divined that the crystal contained information concerning star coordinates. And so your people constructed a huge mothership and support craft that would hold the million or so people that were left to take them to Homeworld (hence the title). The game takes place along the journey to the possibly mythical Homeworld, through the trials and tribulations that occur along the way.

It's not just your race (the Kushan) taking on the raiding

force (the Taiidan) either, you'll also have to deal with other raider races and pirates as well as traders who can be both helpful and harmful. The structure of the game is fairly linear, though the game will evolve to your level of skill as you progress, and your ships and resources from the previous mission carry over, so you need to take the 'long view' perspective to complete the game and reach Homeworld.

Also, you'll still get all the strategy and quick thinking required for your average RTS game, though you'll have to think in three dimensions this time around. You'll be able to set formations for your ships, give

advanced orders with waypoints and damage variables, as well as use a free floating camera point of view which allows you to view battles from right on top of the hull or from miles away for the macro view of the battle. And your troops won't be stupid this time around either (yeah yeah, we've heard that one before, but here's hoping), they'll even talk to you, using a sampling method which allows for 40,000 combinations of words formed into coherent sentences by your troops to report victories or damage and so on.

It takes a lot to get us jaded hacks really excited about a game, but this one truly looks to have it all - the beauty of modern 3Dfx space sims, the quick thinking required for RTS games, a deep and evolving plot, fast and furious gameplay melded with strategic decisions, excellent AI, and, best of all, a game that brings some fresh new ideas to an often boring and derivative genre. Let's hope it lives up to its promise.

BABYLON 5 Combat sim

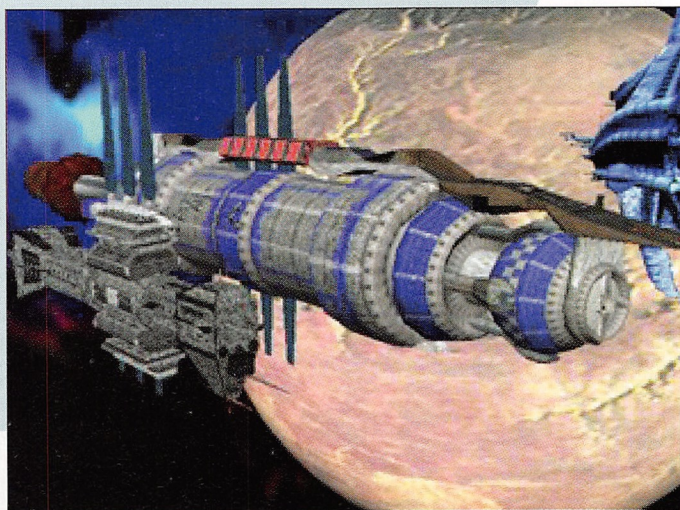
(Name yet to be determined)

A space combat strategy sim for what is easily the best sci-fi series on the box is something to get very excited about

Category Space Combat Sim
Players 1-8 (all forms)
Publisher Sierra/CUC/Cedant
Available TBA

Just as the X-Wing/Tie Fighter series had Star Wars fans dancing with joy and anticipation, the announcement a while back that Sierra had obtained the rights to make a Babylon 5 space combat game sent fans into paroxysms of joy. Their happiness was further enhanced when it was discovered that Yosemite Entertainment, a division of Sierra, were the development team for the project. Yosemite aren't all that well known, but they do have an impressive pedigree, including The Realm, Quest for Glory 5, and SWAT 2, and they're all fans of the series (which is just as important, we think).

The game (with a title yet to be determined) will be a space combat simulator, giving you the opportunity to jump into the pilot's seat of StarFurys, Thunderbolts and the like, as well as giving orders to wingmen, support craft, and capital ships. The single player missions



Just like SW fans yearned to jump into an X-Wing, every B5 fan wants to jump into a Starfury. Oh yeah!

and Randy Littlejohn - Marx has designed games such as Longbow, and also wrote the 'Grail' episode for B5, so she knows what she's doing. Also,

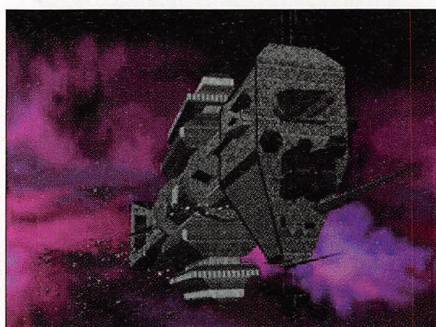
will be story oriented (and therefore fairly linear), though there will be multiplayer mayhem available, including plenty of alien ships to fly, so if you've always wanted to strap into a Minbari Cruiser you might just get your chance. Also, there might be historical training missions to get you up to speed in your craft of choice, including 'simulated' missions against the Shadows, Minbaris and the like - way cool.

It will be set in an authentic Babylon 5 universe, from sometime after the war with President Clarke (which is nice because it should fit in with what we're being shown on TV right about now). The storyline has been penned by Christy Marx

very likely that the real actors will be giving voice to their computer characters (though this isn't definite at the time of going to press, and don't hold your breath to hear Ivanova's voice coming from your speakers either...)

In terms of graphics technology, the game engine used is proprietary, and will feature hardware acceleration (though it seems likely that a software mode will be available, but again this isn't set in stone just yet) - and the screenshots do look very cool and authentic too. There's even talk of allowing some sort of 'skins' to be added into the game by third party developers for squad based multiplayer clan combat, a'la Quake/etc. For those not overly familiar with the stories and craft behind B5, Yosemite have previously created the interactive guide to B5, and there is the distinct possibility for some kind of database to be included to get up to speed on why you're shooting people (or aliens), and what your ship is actually capable of.

Even though we're yet to see a playable demo version, we're reasonably confident in predicting that the game is going to live up to the high standards set by the series, because all the right elements are in place. If it is as good as we hope, don't expect the review very soon, because we'll probably be too busy playing the game...



RED STORM RISING

Red Storm divide their time between Cold War military sims and worlds of fantastic creatures.

A new software company sporting the name Red Storm Entertainment (RSE) will be releasing games in Australia by October this year. Yes, you guessed it, Red Storm Entertainment has a link to what is arguably the most heart stopping action novel to be published by Tom Clancy, Red Storm Rising!

Major Ian Lindgren took time out to interview the CEO of RSE,

Mr Doug Littlejohns.

Doug has an interesting background and is just the character to oversee the development of clandestine games that we will just have to buy!

Doug joined the British Royal Navy in 1964 and

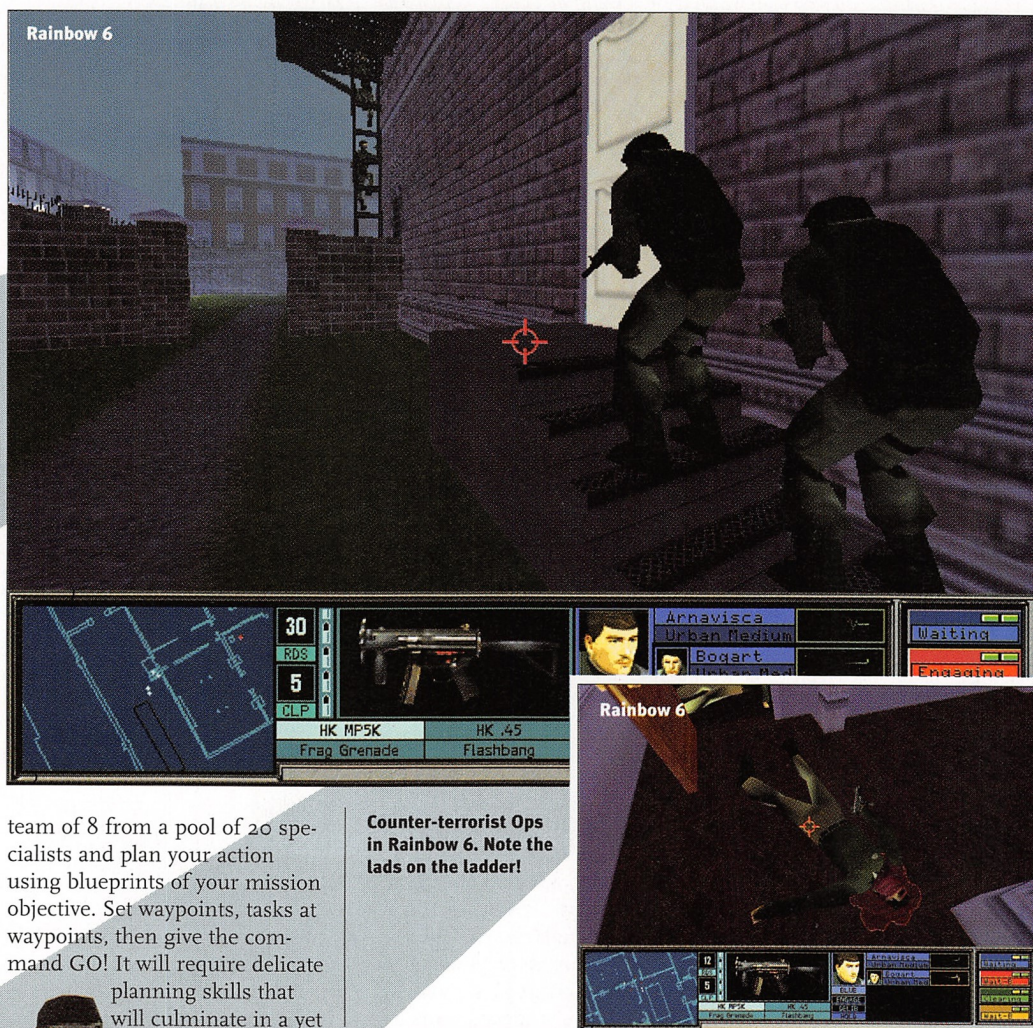
commanded two submarines, one a nuclear ballistic missile SSN, before retiring as a Commodore in 1994. It is no wonder that Clancy sought his advice on unclassified aspects of naval tactics before publishing Red Storm Rising!

I found that RSE is developing an exciting mix of turn based RPG, real time war fighting simulations and games that stretch the limits of your imagination and appeal to all ages. Read on and look at the soon to be released titles.

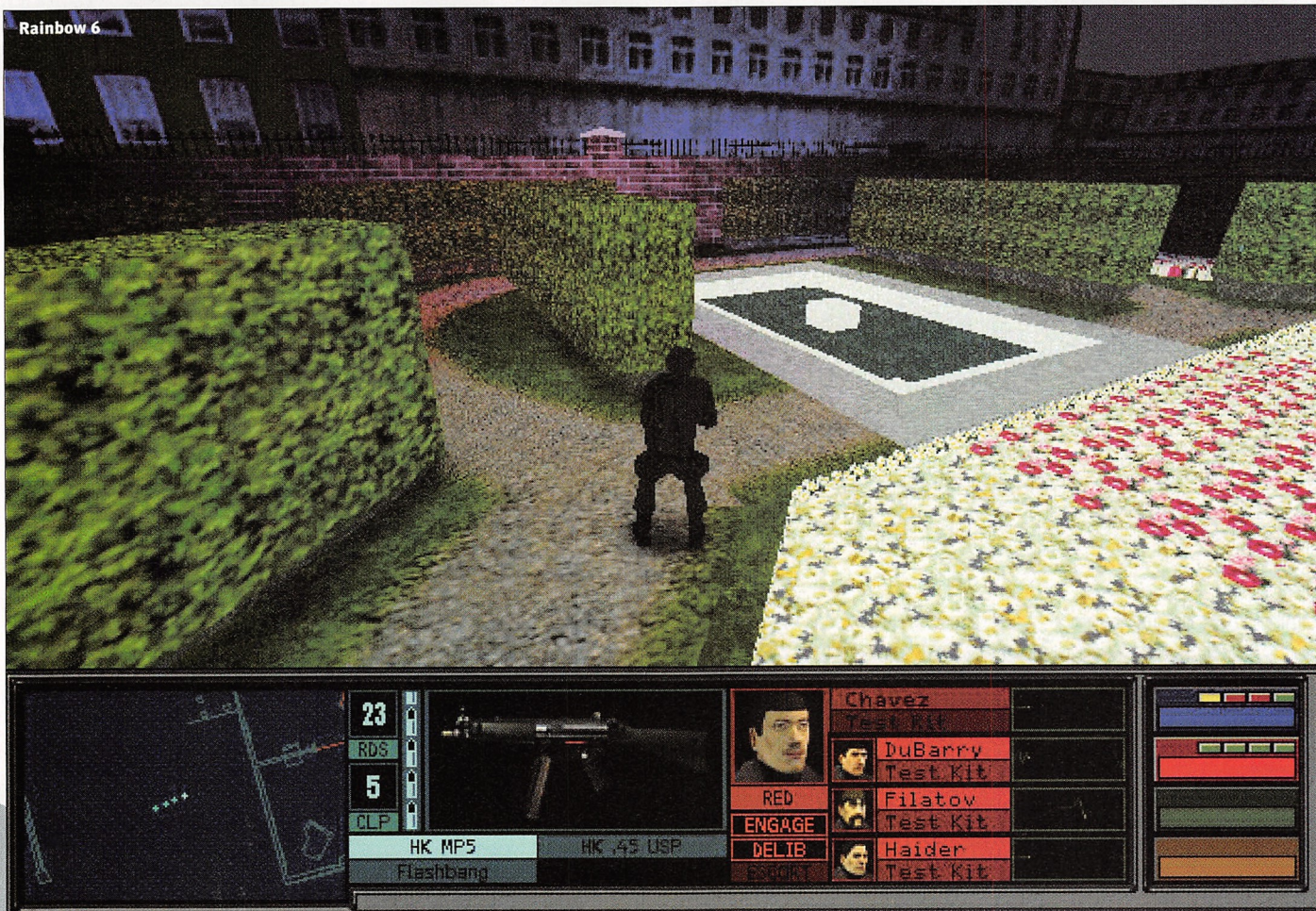
Rainbow 6

Rainbow 6 is the first product to hit the streets, commencing with a Tom Clancy novel in September and a PC game in October. Rainbow is a multinational organisation set up to help governments out of tricky situations. It's a Counter Terrorist (CT) group that provide "services" to governments such as rescuing hostages when it would be politically "messy" to use one's own CT forces.

You get a first and third person view of CT gaming in 17 different missions. Assemble a



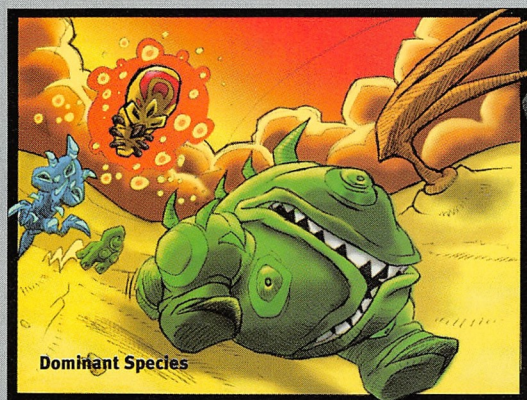
Rainbow 6



to be released scene on the roadways of Sydney. A Mission Disk will follow in the New Year.

Dominant Species

Soon after, probably in late September, Dominant Species will be released. This is a most unusual real time strategy game where you become the brain of one of 27 types of hybrid creatures on another planet. For millennia you have been living peacefully until the humans land on the planet and start harvesting your food. I was taken back by the weird and wonderful hybrid creatures that Doug described. You must master each of them to mutate to a space version of Tyrannosaurus Rex in order to beat the humans.

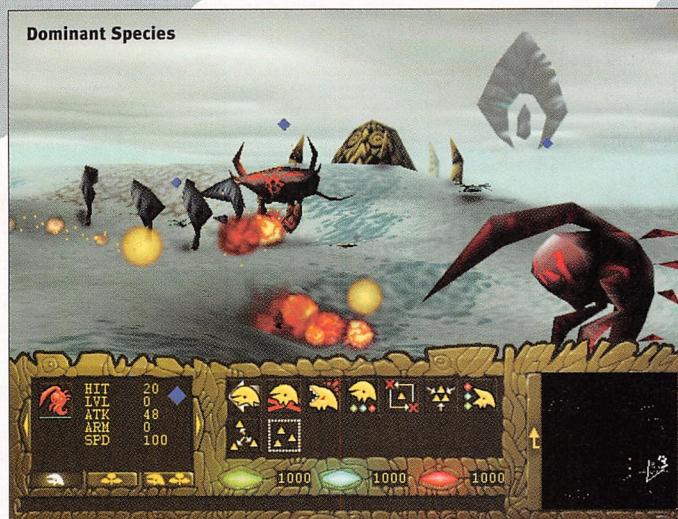


Ruthless.com

November will see the release of Tom Clancy's Ruthless.com. This is a turn based strategy game where "greed is good!" A Clancy novel will accompany it and you will start life as the CEO of a small electronics company being squeezed by the big boys! You take them on with law suits, industrial espionage and by assassinating other CEOs. Dirty tricks stuff!



Dominant Species



Force 21

For me, the most exciting prospect is a development that was leaked to me called Force 21. I can't say much (and I never break my word!), but it will be a real time war simulation based in the US Force XXI digitised battlefield of the future. This is where you use a console to read battlefield activities from sensors, then assign men and machines to execute your orders through point and click. I think we will find that it includes the concept of a couple of countries in the Asia Pacific region having a dust up over natural resources. A

multinational force will have to restore peace and that's where you come in! The concept is superb and I hope to find out more in the future. The Project Leader is an ex-US Army officer who spent his last posting in the elite OPFOR (Opposing Force) at the US National Training Centre. Apparently he thrust his resume at Clancy and Littlejohns when they were visiting the NTC, and they hired him on the spot! Some people have all the luck!

All RSE games will be distributed worldwide by Take 2 Interactive, and in Australia by Directsoft. Watch out for our reviews.

THE SCORE

THE OPINION ARCHIVE

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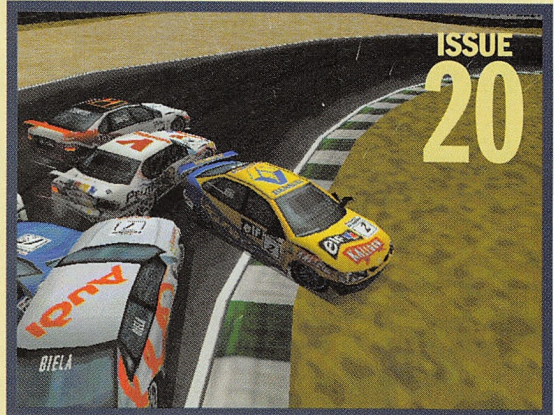
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F-16 AGGRESSOR. DROP-DEAD GORGEOUS. ALL-OUT DEADLY.

F-16 Aggressor is the closest anybody outside the military will get to experience flight in the cockpit of the F-16 Falcon.

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FEATURES

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- Acceleration and deceleration true characteristic. P133, 16 MBS RAM, Windows® 95.



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REVIEWS

Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue.



A mixed bag of goodies this month. The 'Old' are SWAT 2 and Hardwar. Sierra's (or whatever they're calling themselves this month) SWAT 2 is the sequel to a rather tepid and dull game of a couple of years ago. This time around they've picked up on the universally popular 'little guys running around shooting stuff' theme, as opposed to the original's slightly crazy mix of FMV and adventure game-style point and shooting. Really though, it's the same game, but now it's just a bit easier to play, making more sense and all.

Hardwar is the other 'Old'. OK, it's a brand new game, but Hardwar has been designed and marketed as the new 'Elite' (an absolutely classic oldie from the C64 and Amiga days). But it's not, most extremely unfortunately. Elite was set in a huge universe and it felt like it. Part of the magic, a big part. Hardwar, conversely (much like UbiSoft's Subculture), is crippled by severe claustrophobia. The play area is tiny by comparison and this is a fatal flaw. Gameplay is fine, but after just a day of playing you'll have explored all there is to see. Dull dull dull and very disappointing. We were all looking forward to this one in a big way.



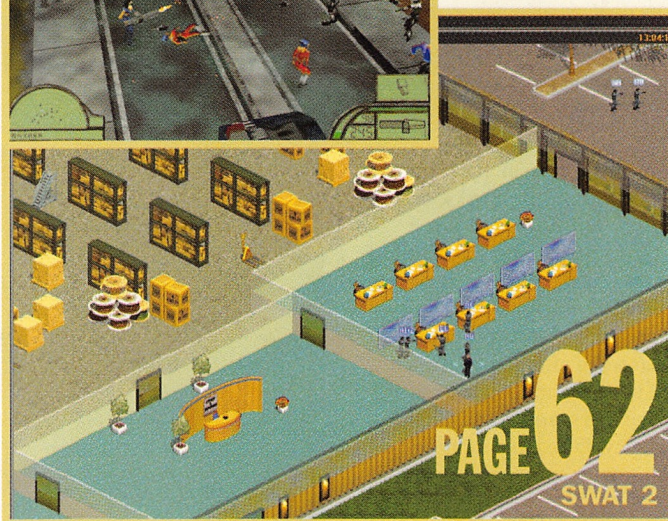
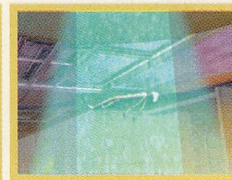
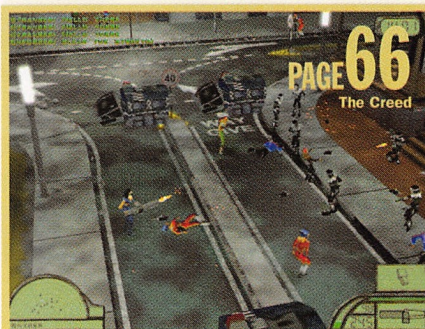
'New' comes in the form Vangers, which is just about the only original title in this issue. Sigh. Definitely worth checking out, Vangers looks amazing (in a weird, screwed up kind of way) and plays like nothing else. It's a driving game, but driving has little to do with the overall point of it. Love it.

'Borrowed' is a common theme in games, and this month is no exception. There's been some fine idea-stealing going on in development land, which is why Vangers stands out. 'The Creed', great game, I'm thinking Syndicate Wars. War Games, bad game, I'm thinking every crappy RTS I've seen. It could be depressing, but hey, it's just a game, right?

As for the 'Blue'. Well, it fitted the rhyme and I figured that by the time I reached the end of the page I'd be able to figure out some way of describing a game in this issue as 'Blue'. Silly me.

Ben Mansill
Editor

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THE PC POWERPLAY SCORING SYSTEM

95%+	PLATINUM The Best. Virtually faultless, reserved for games which cause loss of sleep from thinking of nothing else.
90-94%	GOLD A classic. Either an unquestionable example of superiority within its genre, or a ground breaking game that'll be setting trends.
80-90%	A strong, eminently playable game. Hard to fault and likely to still be on the hard drive in 6 month's time.
60-80%	Competent and generally enjoyable. Flaws or mediocrity hold these games back from higher ratings.
40-60%	Average and ordinary. Not bad, not good. Ideal gift.
0-40%	Bad, really bad. Boring, shamelessly unoriginal, cheap and horrible.

URBAN ASSAULT

A '3D C&C' is no longer the developers Holy Grail. Thankfully. Here's an alternative twist on the concept that's worthy.



Variation on The Theme

Ever since the release of Battlezone, the whole marriage of action strategy and first-person action seems to be damn hot property. One of Battlezone's charms was that it did well in disguising its gameplay roots. Urban Assault is another of these hybrid titles, and in healthy display of survival of the fittest, offers a different twist on this (still) new genre. UA however, is rather obvious in its blending of two already existing genres. The conventional RTS (including the likes of KKnD, C&C, War 2), meets the first person action game (more Mechwarrior than Doom, though).

Basically, you control your units in the first person (a la Mechwarrior), or select them on your tactical map (a la RTS) and direct them to the destination or battle of your choice. All tactical decisions are made from your Command Centre, which is basi-

We all have our little quirks, especially when it comes to gaming. Effectively, when we sit down to play a game, a highly immersive experience is what we're after. Some games are naturally more immersive than others, and it's surprising just how far a large monitor and sub-woofer speaker kit can go in dazzling the senses and suspending that disbelief.

Instant military genius

Often though, there needs to be more. What's missing is that human touch. The action strategy genre has thrown a few gems our way, and a hallmark of such titles is the ability to suck you into the action so much so that you hardly notice anything other than the state of play on-screen. Well, I found the perfect complement to such titles. The cigar, and the beard. Whack a big, fat, smelly cigar in your mouth while you play and you have, on a sub-conscious level, access to the most impressive collective military genius ever displayed since



On the plus side, the developers reckon you can have up to 420 units running around blowing each other up

the war movie first graced the silver (and small) screen.

You think clearer, the right tactical decisions become more intuitive, and you also look the part (remember Hannibal from the A-Team? I rest my case). This totally mystical phenomenon is perfectly complemented by the occasional stroke of the other military tactician's staple, the beard. Try it.

I went through 12 cigars during Urban Assault and didn't even bother to count (and eventually notice) the number of goatie strokes. Did I go through that many cancer sticks to add substance to a lacking experience or to simply complement an already satisfying one? I did so for both reasons actually. Urban Assault has its faults, but it's also a heck of a lot of fun to play.



The first person perspective, shown in most of these shots, isn't that necessary in the initial missions, though later on you really do need to get down and dirty

cally a big floating fortress. It's also the most important unit in the game, as this is where units and building are produced.

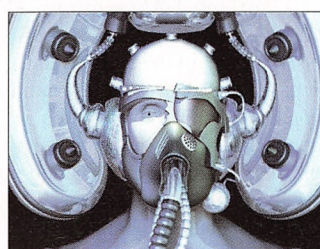
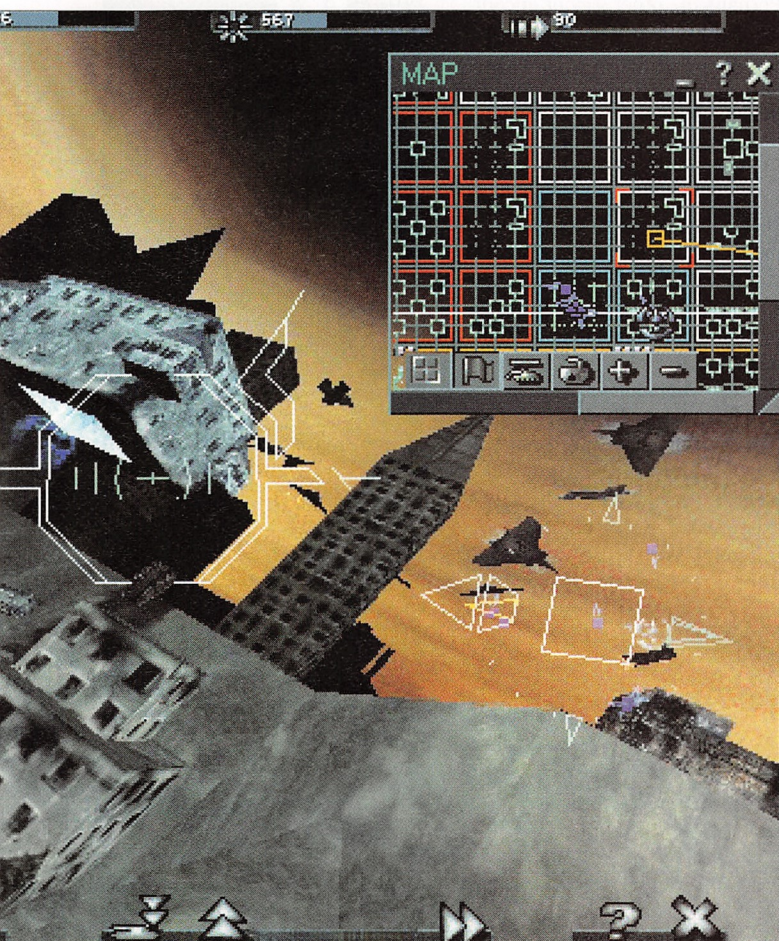
When the centre's energy hits zero, you can no longer create and command your units and your mission is considered a failure. Sprinkled throughout the recipe of futuristic war-mongering is resource collection and management (of course), as well as unit and building advancement.

Energy is the secret

The basic aim at the beginning of every level is to explore your immediate surroundings to find a power station so you can start harnessing the bread and butter of UA - Energy. Energy is (as is the trend in games these days), the one and only resource you have to worry about during the game. To keep things from being too simple however, you have to decide how you're going to distribute your energy in three



areas. There's Command Centre energy (zero energy = game over), unit and building production energy, and CC teleport energy (required for transporting your CC to other power stations). Each has their relative importance, and constant juggling is required in the game. After that, it's basically building up your strike force and kicking some arse, all supported



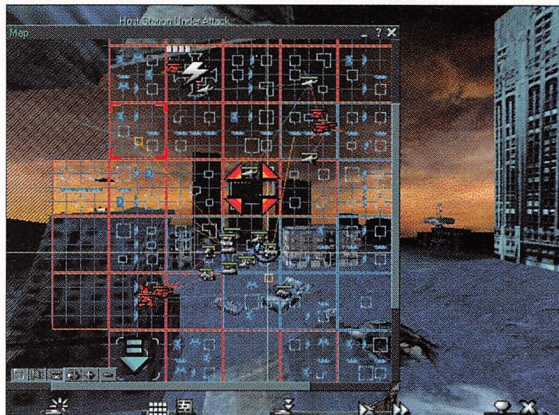
by a funky sci-fi storyline, interesting mission objectives, and the occasional cut-scene.

There are 15 units and 3 building types to play around with. You can build a power station (for added energy absorption), flak guns (turrets for defence around your power stations or CC) and a radar centre. The 15 units are a lack lustre assortment of land and air units, namely being jeeps, tanks, helicopters, fighters and bombers. While appearing fairly average, these units are well balanced and demands that the player creates a balanced strike force

if victory is sought after. As far as the first person-aspect goes, UA is a tidy affair. A HUD let's you know what's going on, and the controls are just enough to allow you to get the job done. It's no Mechwarrior 2 though. If you bite the bullet, you're whisked off to the nearest unit under your command to continue the battle.

Grid wars

Territory is handled uniquely in UA. Every mission is set on a specifically sized battlefield, divided neatly up into little grids (or as the Yanks call 'em, blocks). Scattered throughout the battlefield are four major items of interest. There's the power station, the technology upgrade building, the enemy command centre (destroying this pretty much gives you control over the battlefield), and a key gate (which after capturing,



The tactical map, which functions in much the same way as your average RTS game

opens up the end a warp gate to the next level). Grids with a blue outline indicate blocks under your power, a clear outline represents neutral, and a coloured one, the enemy.

Gaining control of a neutral or enemy grid is done by either firing at a building on the grid or into the ground itself. Grid control has two main benefits - greater radar visibility and increased energy output. Since a lot of the work is done from the tactical map display, you'll want as much of the terrain as possible visible on the map.

This is where my first major gripe with UA surfaces. In the early levels (before the radar building option surfaces), the only real way of knowing your terrain is by capturing it, so imagine having to stop at every grid in a 10 x 10 square area to capture it. This adds up to 100 grids and a totally anal approach in dominating the battlefield, something UA could have done without.

HUGE battles

Urban Assault, visually, pales in comparison to the graphical splendour of Battlezone. Units are basically flat geometric shapes, with little personality. The landscape is generic and dull. While poor graphics are usually a result of lack of initiative on the developers, UA's visual weakness has a trade off. It's visual weakness allows for perhaps the game's greatest strength. I read in the press

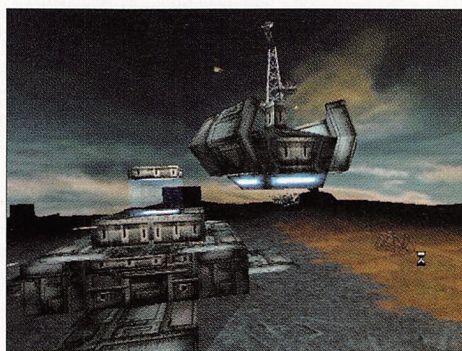
material that up to 420 units can duke it out on the battlefield at once. That's absolutely mind-boggling, when you think about the processing power required for such a feat. I ran UA on a P166 with a Diamond Monster 3D and the game ran impressively and comfortably. I'll admit that in the course of the game it never got as high

as 420 for me. Regularly though, there were at least one hundred units on screen at any given time. The spectacle on screen will have any war-gaming enthusiast frothing uncontrollably at the mouth, it's that good. The result is pure and unadulterated chaos, and will be something on which new entries to the genre will be judged.

If anything, UA is more an RTS than anything else. Most of the gameplay in the early levels comes from moving units around on the tactical map, with rarely the need to have to jump in the vehicles for a first-person action fest. Terratools (the developer for Microsoft) constantly encourage the player to jump in the hot seat however. The main incentive is that felled enemy units leave energy discharge that can only be picked up units under direct (first person) control. This is also the

only way of repairing a damaged unit. As the game progresses, not only does the first person aspect break the monotony of the tactical map, but is necessary to achieve some mission goals.

One final annoyance is the AI. Though there is a



squadron manager that allows to set aggressiveness levels, units react a with a little less conviction than you could hope. Perhaps the other way of encouraging players to take the helm of an attack chopper.

It's just fun

I simply had a lot of fun playing Urban Assault. Yes, there are some annoying design flaws, the visuals (especially of the units themselves) are lacking any true character, and there is a lack of strategic and resource management depth in UA. These aren't nails in a fairly shallow coffin though. There's enough in UA to keep fans of strategy and action happy till the very last mission. What did it for me was the complete and total chaos that was experienced during some of the missions. With scores of my units on the battlefield at once,

and the overall battle completely spread out to span the entire map, all I could do was keep pumping out those units and hope for victory. A title in a usually mechanical and precise genre that can do that to you I found extremely refreshing. I also found that the other great compliment to this game besides the cigar and the beard was a seriously diabolical laugh.

March Stepnik

81%

Category Strategy/Action
Players 1-4
Publisher Microsoft
Price \$89.95
Rating TBA
Available Now

For A FUN strategy game. Multiplayable. Like Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang: a fun experience for purely unconventional reasons.

Against Graphics, limited strategy and management aspects. Managing a battalion of tanks when the enemy attacks is perfect training for becoming a kindergarten teacher.

Need Win 95 (duh), P120, 16MB RAM, 80MB HD.

Want P166, 32MB RAM, graphics accelerator.



60 PC PowerPlay

PLUS+

Games

COMBAT FLIGHT SIMULATOR

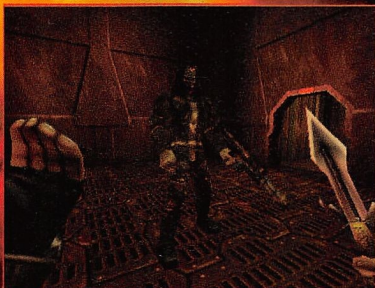
Flight simulator realism, air combat excitement!

<http://www.microsoft.com/games/>

Go here for the latest updates.

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Actual in-game screen shots



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- Join the most vicious combat specialists in a high-tension real-time nightmare.

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CD-ROM

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Police Quest: SWAT2

Well, it couldn't be any worse than the original... Sierra come through with a very tasty and different strategy game.

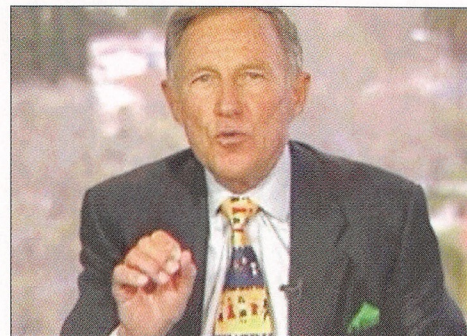


Civilians flee, terrorists go crazy & you save the day. Warm & fuzzt, huh?



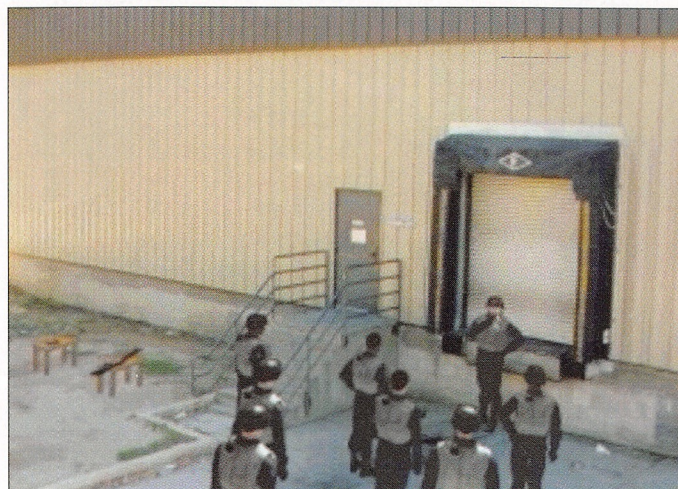
The other Mr Gates

Yes it's all action and intrigue in Sierra's new real time strategy game SWAT2. Don't worry, this game has no relation at all to the awful FMV thing that was SWAT the original! SWAT stands for Special Weapons And Tactics and it is a special branch of the police force trained for handling hostage situations as well as any other terrorist or criminal threat. The SWAT force was first envisaged by Darryl F. Gates, who advised Sierra on their first SWAT title and has returned for this



A cold bead of sweat slowly made its way down the side of Kowalski's face, as he lifted a hand off his MP5 to wipe it away he looked out from his hiding place at the scene below. The Cointreau Ball, a swank fest for the rich, ugly and famous, the corrupt and the corruptible. We had information that the boss of the Five Eyes terrorist group would be here tonight, as well as several plastic surgeons wanted for crimes against humanity. It was widely known that the Five Eyes' boss was a big fan of Silicon and the team had its trap laid well. It wasn't long

before the crack SWAT operative made out the luscious curves of undercover officer Lucy Torres, her combat hardened Silicon implants swaying ever so slightly as she walked (a sure sign of fine craftsmanship) on her left arm was our target, Mr. Five Eyes himself. As Torres and Mr Five Eyes moved passed the designated area Kowalski slipped out from his hiding place, pistol whipping his target with almost medical precision and then cuffed him while he lay unconscious on the cold marble floor. Torres turned back with a smile, cupping her size 40 D's in her hands "Best investment I ever made".





Graphic quality is very high, if a little bland

fore in developing new tactics to help officers survive these situations while achieving a satisfactory outcome.

Big guns

And so here you are, in control of your own unit of professional SWAT officers, and charged with eliminating the Five Eyes terrorist

group, permanently. Or, as fate would have it, you can also choose to make your name in the Five Eyes group opposing those armour plated SWAT heads at every turn. All up there are thirty missions to complete, fifteen from SWAT's perspective and fifteen from the Five Eyes perspective. To try and give you a rough idea of the format of the game I suppose the closest comparison would be X-Com Apocalypse running in real-time mode. It's that sort of isometric strategy approach where the player has to constantly be aware of his troop's tactical situation and make sure that every line-of-sight is covered. At the very beginning of the game you are treated to a pep talk from big Darryl himself and then you're off to your first mission, after carefully selecting your team from the pool of officers. There are a variety of skills which your officers can be trained in and each has a unique combination of those skills, it's important to take the right people on each mission. There's also a pretty large selection of weaponry and support equipment, all realistically por-



trayed of course, and you have to make sure you've got exactly what you need for the coming situation, need rope? Smoke grenades? If you leave behind vital equipment you'll have to start the mission all over again.

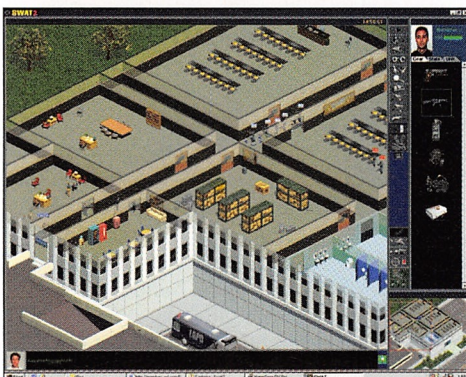
As you can see from the screenies on these pages SWAT2 takes an isometric viewpoint and the graphics are sharp and clearly defined. You'll find

There's always plenty of parking when terrorists seize the local K-Mart

that a lot of the things you see on screen can be shot, blown up or burnt and so the backgrounds are quite interactive as well as looking good. Most of your mission maps are quite small and the action therefore concentrated and intense and experience is



essential. I'd say a good two or three hours is needed to get your head around the game and figure out some of the little quirks. For example it is hard to define the line-of-sight sometimes and your officers may end up in the open when you think they are in cover.



Interface blues

Which brings me to the meat and potatoes part of this title, the interface. Games like SWAT2 live or die based on the quality and amount of thought which has been put into the interface and for my taste Sierra have just missed the mark. There just aren't enough hot keys and not enough thought has gone into the sequence of actions. For example when an officer sees a terrorist with his gun down he is supposed to challenge him to see if he will surrender. This is all well and good but if the terrorist decides to go the tonk immediately, basically you're dead because you can't adjust your actions quickly enough to react in time! In other words you're fighting the interface instead of your opponent and, put simply, this is unforgivable. Secondly the line-of-sight is a bit

bogus and sometimes terrorists just suddenly appear right next to your officer(s) causing much soiling of pants and gnashing of teeth.

I have heard of people finishing SWAT2 in three hours, perhaps another reason to be a bit wary of this one. While SWAT2 is certainly unique and could be great for the right person, most gamers will struggle to find a buzz from it.

George Soropos

PLUS+



Special Enforcement Teams

The Player Character SWAT2's Department (SWAT) Special Enforcement Teams (S.E.T.) and provides high rank officers with special tactical capabilities. These are made known first of all the main office in action and the Lake Tahoe Detachment. Personnel shown in the Lake Tahoe Team.

The S.E.T. units are trained for high risk operations, including search warrant, protection detail, hostage rescue, tactical entry, etc. As with any tactical unit, they must be equipped with the best in equipment and training. Weapons, tactical gear, and equipment are provided to the units in accordance with the training. Weapons, tactical gear, and equipment are provided to the units in accordance with the training.



Here is team attire for snow operations.

<http://www.iwn.com/pcso/s et.htm>

Planning a gun toting rampage in Lake Tahoe? Think again! And here's why...

75%

Category Real Time Strategy
Players 1 -Multi
Publisher Sierra FX
Price TBA
Rating MA15+
Available Now

For Different take on the usual real time strategy fare, real events in real time! The fact that the game is based on reality adds a certain atmosphere to the proceedings.

Against Tricky interface can frustrate the player pretty quickly, some missions are very short and some players may only get half a days play from the entire game!

Need P133, 16Mb RAM, Win 95, 98

Want P233, 32Mb RAM

IT MAKES THE REST LOOK TAME

S.C.A.R.S

"Whiplash action and killer graphics provides gripping replayability. Nine tracks, completely unique environments and alternative routes keep the pace frantic".



It's here! The racing game that makes the

others look like a drive in the park. Half animal, half machine these cars are ready to rip the roads to shreds. In a no holds barred adrenaline charged speed fest, you can take on 4 players on split screen on the PSX and N64 with multi player mayhem on the PC. Staggering 3D graphics and sheer driveability make S.C.A.R.S. a game that will really leave it's mark.



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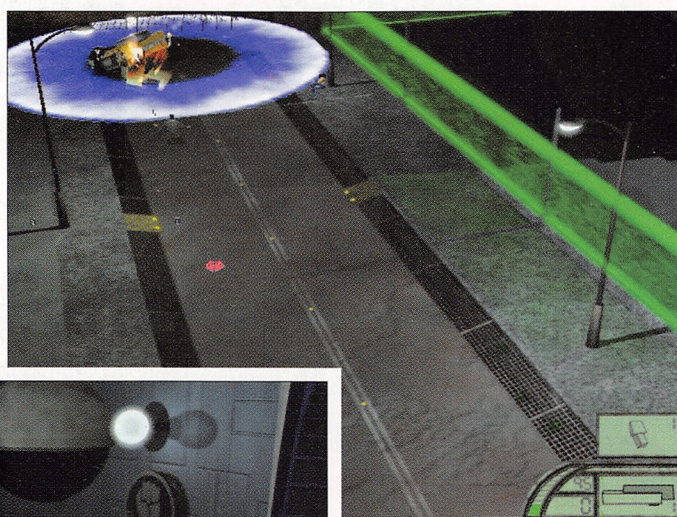
THE CREED

It's got an interactive environment, cool visuals, lots of swearing, Syndicate Wars style gameplay, and it's Australian!

You find yourself marooned in a city plagued by criminals, psychos and devil worshipping cultists armed to the teeth. Violence rules the streets, and your survival depends on your ability to get street-smart pronto.

A description of an average Saturday night pub crawl in downtown Sydney? Nah, this is the city of Cerberus, Earth Federation colony on planet Outpost IV. Known to be the most violent city in the galaxy, it's just the place you didn't want your starship's engines going critical, forcing an escape pod landing. But it happened anyway. Emerging bruised and battered from your pod, the local police arrive.

Unfortunately, the local constabulary's dispensation of instant justice makes Judge Dredd look like a civil rights loving, tree hugging hippy. They consider your crash landing a breaking of the law, and it's guns out time. Running for your life, an old hermit appears from nowhere shouting out something about the city heading for an apocalyptic end. End result? You're stuck on a slum at the ass end of the galaxy, without a friend in the world and the city on the edge of destruction. You gotta find a way off this rock.

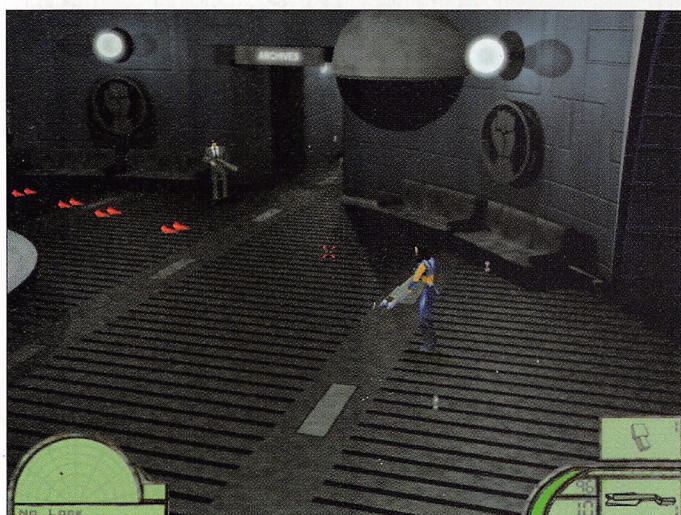


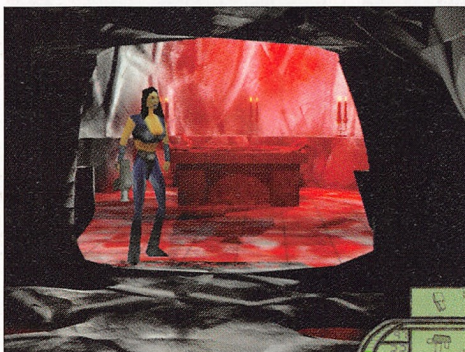
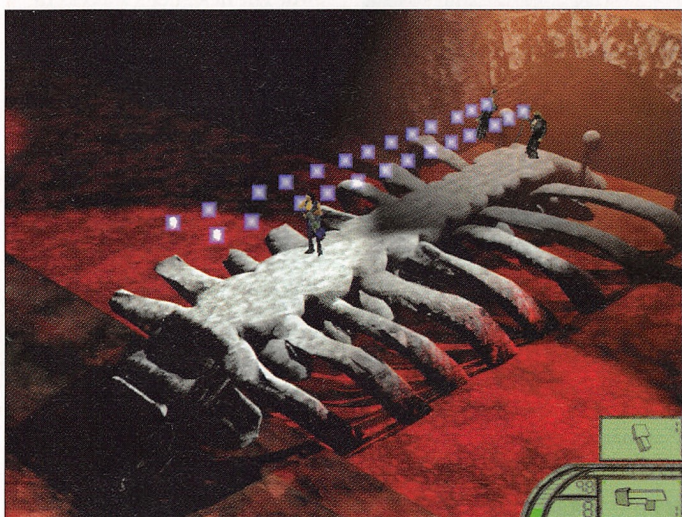
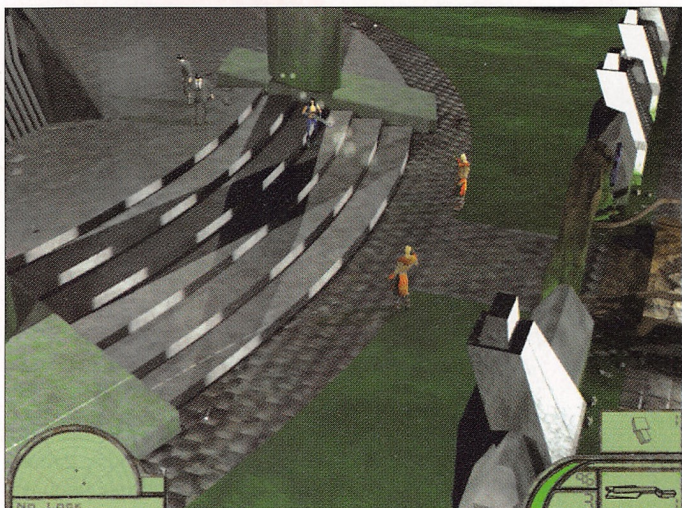
The future will actually be bright and sunny, but we won't worry about that for now

(very well animated) on screen textured polygon character can freely roam about the many pre-rendered scenes that make up Cerberus. Everything that you would expect a decadent city of the future is here. Cafe bars, demonic temples, parklands, research labs and an assault weapons shop for those wanting to keep up with the latest in personal fashion. There is a real sense of atmosphere ever present, from the ambient techno tones of the video arcade through to the eerie Blade Runner-ish street lighting. All very nice, but the real clincher is the cast of characters that populate the world of Cerberus. There are lots of everyday Mr and Mrs average types going about their daily wanderings, but intermingled in the normal crowd are more dangerous types. Maniac punks, religious zealot gang members, prostitutes and government agents to name a few. Unlike your typical

Visit your local weapons shop

Violence, mayhem and a desperate escape. The Creed's scenario seems built for a snug fit in the latest first person shooter. Instead, the designers have taken a different tack, re-introducing the technical style of such hallowed games as the original Syndicate and Crusader, although updated with a more varied use of fixed camera angles. Your





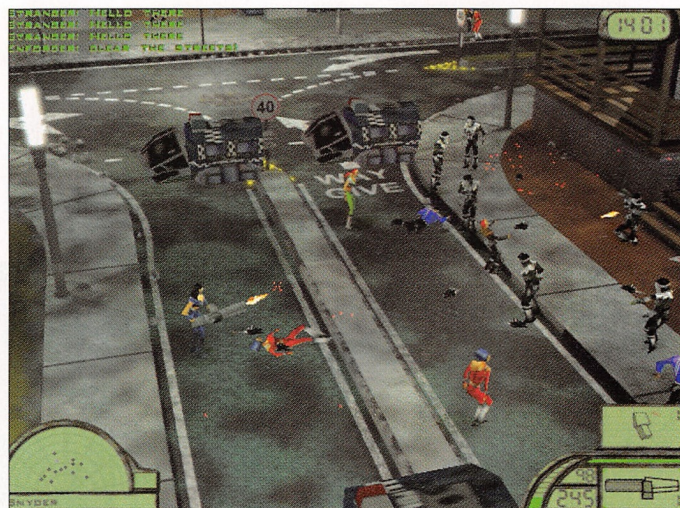
The unpredictable nature of events, really conveys a feeling of risk and constant danger around every corner. It's to the designer's credit that you will rarely relax in The Creed.

Get a shotgun and get a real job...

Quake clone which contain creatures that only pop into life when you happen to approach them, the denizens of Cerberus are alive and carrying out their personal agendas on a real time basis; Vehicle accidents complete with drivers abusing each other; People screaming for help, as they get assaulted in violent muggings; Police involved in furious shootouts with criminal scum. I even had the pleasure of watching an overly inquisitive youth try and enter a fortified gang fortress only to be chased out with rocket launchers.

You're always free to get involved in any situation, with maybe the hope of scoring a dropped weapon or two but be careful of becoming a target.

Walking around enjoying the virtual anarchy of Cerberus is well and good, but that doesn't get you any closer to escaping this doomed world. For that you need to seek out employment with one of the three factions that fight for control of the city. There is The Brotherhood, a group of religious extremists bent on enforcing their own twisted version of morality on the populace. Of course if it takes a flame thrower to awaken somebody to the light, all the better. The Brotherhood's bitter enemies are The Order. A bunch of devil worshippers that finally got bored with listening to Metallica records backwards. These lovely fellows have taken up the arms smuggling/ espionage/ killing



Death and destruction in familiar urban environments

ber of the Brotherhood leadership experience the "Sins of the Flesh" by recruiting a lady of the night. Then

everybody they see business in a very big way. Stuck in the middle is the Colonial Earth Government. Cool looking guys decked out in classy grey and black suits with matching weaponry. They think nothing of conducting very underhanded activities in the name of maintaining order. To gain a job, just wander up to employment terminals situated throughout the city and peruse what missions are on offer.

At first you are given simple tasks such as ferrying equipment from Point A to Point B, but as you climb the ladder of success, missions will involve more complex and exciting duties. Test out high level Mechwarrior type technology for the Government or help a mem-

there are classic missions as in breaking a police siege of a house by way of mini-gun, thus rescuing a scientist important to The Order's chemical weapons division. It's busy times ahead with 200 missions for the three sides, but you can pick and choose who you work for and not all the missions have to be completed to achieve your goal of planetary escape.

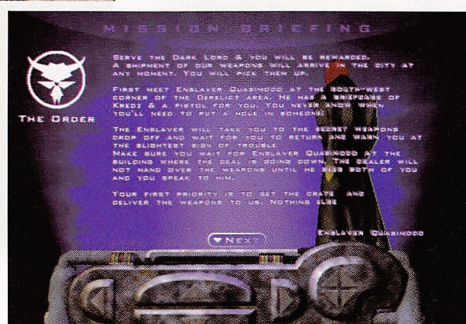
Over sensitive parents beware!

With its mix of Satanism, prostitution and rampant crime, The Creed takes gaming political incorrectness to a new high. Visually you have people burning to a cinder, followed by being eaten by rats upon death. In addition, you better unplug Grandma's hearing aid when





This is part of an apparently 'vibrant' city. Party on, Wayne!

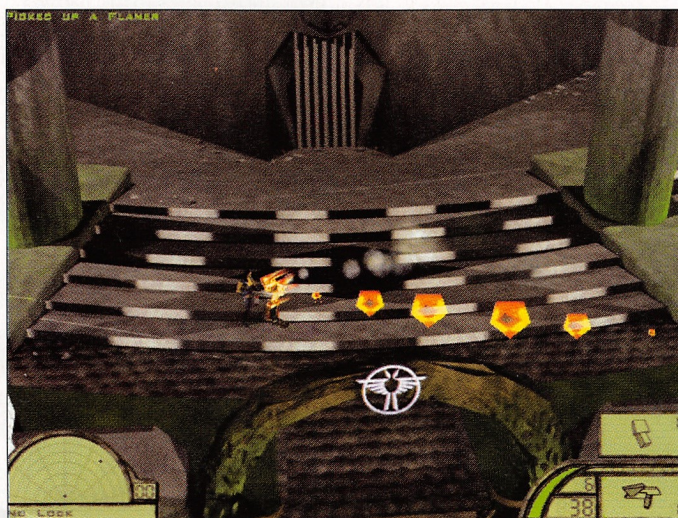


characters start yelling "F#@&er" and "Sh!t" all about the place. The profanity is made all the more entertaining because of the distinct local accents running throughout the game. Yes The Creed is an Aussie production, and it's nice to see Australian game makers showing the world that not only are our game designs the biz, but we down under folk are the kings of verbally "exciting" conversations.

Co-op excellent

Can the Creed compete in a world where first person shooters are getting more visually stunning and kick ass all the time? Well yes and no. The graphics are excellent by Syndicate type standards. Rocket explosions cause people to go flying across the screen, vehicles catch fire and the first time you enter the Order's Pit of Damnation...stunning. Add in a 3D accelerator card and lighting effects add a

lovely level of gloss. The all important multiplayer angle is taken care of in co-op team based mission games. Lots of fun, especially combined with customised scenarios. Deathmatch, though, just isn't a viable option. Even though your character can walk, run and tumble-roll to either side, these simplistic moves just don't compare to the likes of Quake or Unreal deathmatch. First person 3D games have deathmatch sewn up; they are



PLUS⁺

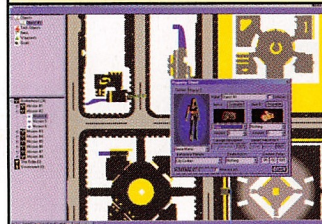
www.thecreed.com - Make sure your browser is decked out with the Shockwave plug-in.

way more immersive in this area. That aside, The Creed is a game with a definite atmosphere of its own. The designer's success in creating the feel of battling for survival in a living vibrant city, makes for a very entertaining and engrossing game.

Pete Sharpe

AGOS

It stands for Advanced Gaming Operating System, and it's the key to some very fanciful mission editing possibilities. The Creed contains around 42 character types and 50 varieties of weapons/objects. That's a lot of material for creative gamers to come up with some classy scenarios. AGOS allows the editing of character map positions, behaviour scripts and inventory down to the detail of carrying briefcases etc, so it fits the bill as a powerful tool. Thankfully its very Windows orientated in design so doesn't require a degree in programming. Yippee. The Creed Web site regularly offers new missions for players to try out, and even allows the uploading of your own masterpieces for the world to see. We're hoping to see lots of missions along the lines of sci-fi meets Pulp Fiction.



86%

Category Action/adventure
Players 1-8 (all forms of DirectPlay)
Publisher EA/Dreamtime
Price \$TBA
Rating MA15+
Available Late '98

For Storyline rocks along, there are surprises along the way. The AI controlled citizens do their own thing, no game or mission is ever totally predictable. The weapons are the definition of destruction.

Against For a game with so many missions, a bigger playing area would have been welcomed. Officially 400 screens, Cerberus doesn't feel quite that big after you've done the circuit a few times.

Need P166, 16Mb RAM, WIN95.

Want P200, 32Mb RAM, 3Dfx

3D SUPPORT

Any Direct3D card will make The Creed look even better

A movie poster for the film 'Half the Battle'. The central figure is a green alien with a large, yellow, cone-shaped head. The alien's face is partially obscured by a bright pink mask that has large, white, rectangular teeth. The alien's eyes are green and slanted. It has a silver chain around its neck and a silver rod in its mouth. The alien is holding a yellow object in its hands. The background is black. The text 'HALF THE BATTLE' is at the top in a stylized font, with 'IS GETTING' in smaller letters below it. The text 'A HEAD' is in large letters to the right. At the bottom right, the text 'THE OTHER HALF IS KEEPING YOURS' is displayed. There are small circular logos at the bottom left.

H.E.D.Z.

The cover art for the video game 'Hedz: Head Extreme Destruction 2000' features a large, stylized purple head with a wide, toothy grin and a green tongue. The head is set against a background of a dense, colorful collage of various cartoon and pop culture characters. The title 'HEDZ' is written in large, bold, yellow letters with a black outline, and 'HEAD EXTREME DESTRUCTION 2000' is written in smaller, black letters below it. The entire cover is framed by a yellow and black striped border.



HARDWAR

Old-school Amiga/C64 gamers loved Elite. This should have been the new Elite. This is not the new Elite.

Titan can be a cold and unforgiving place. You managed to scrape enough cash together to buy a cheap Moth (Hardwar's name for its ships), fit it out and start doing a bit of trading around the outposts on this desolate moon. You came prepared for action, prepared for intrigue and, most importantly, prepared to get rich. But you weren't prepared for what awaited you on that bleak unforgiving rock. Horrifying, soul destroying, mind sapping endless boredom!

Anti-Elite

Hardwar is one of those titles that's been coming for a long time, almost three years in fact. It has also managed to generate quite a bit of expectation among fans of the old 'Elite' style space trading games promising, as it did, to liven up the genre with a new and exciting update to their favourite genre. Unfortunately someone forgot to tell the programmers. Instead of creating a game which encourages exploration and wonder at the vastness of the universe, a game that inspires you to go where no K-Mart shopper has gone before, Gremlin have come up with the antithesis of this, indeed you could call it 'the anti-Elite'.

Traditionally the ideal space/action trading game has been made up of these things: A vast and varying universe to explore, a generous amount of technology upgrades to improve your vessel, a solid 3D combat model and an intriguing trade and smuggling economy. Hardwar has none of these things, and fails to replace them with anything of consequence.

You see,



Hardwar takes place on one miserable, polluted and, to be blunt, exceedingly dull little moon - Titan. Sure, there are nine or so settlements on that moon, each with its own shops and cops, but it's still just the one little moon and after a few days play it starts to tell really badly on the game. Each settlement looks virtually identical in terms of architecture and colour scheme and the obligatory frame rate saving fog is everywhere. Sure it's '3Dfx' enhanced but hey, if you give



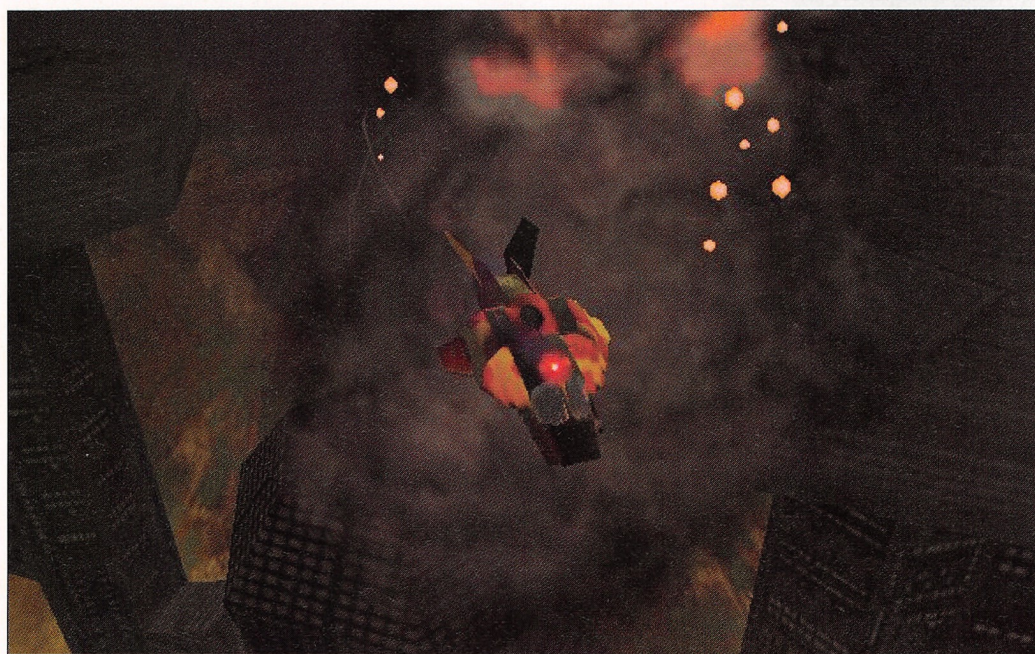
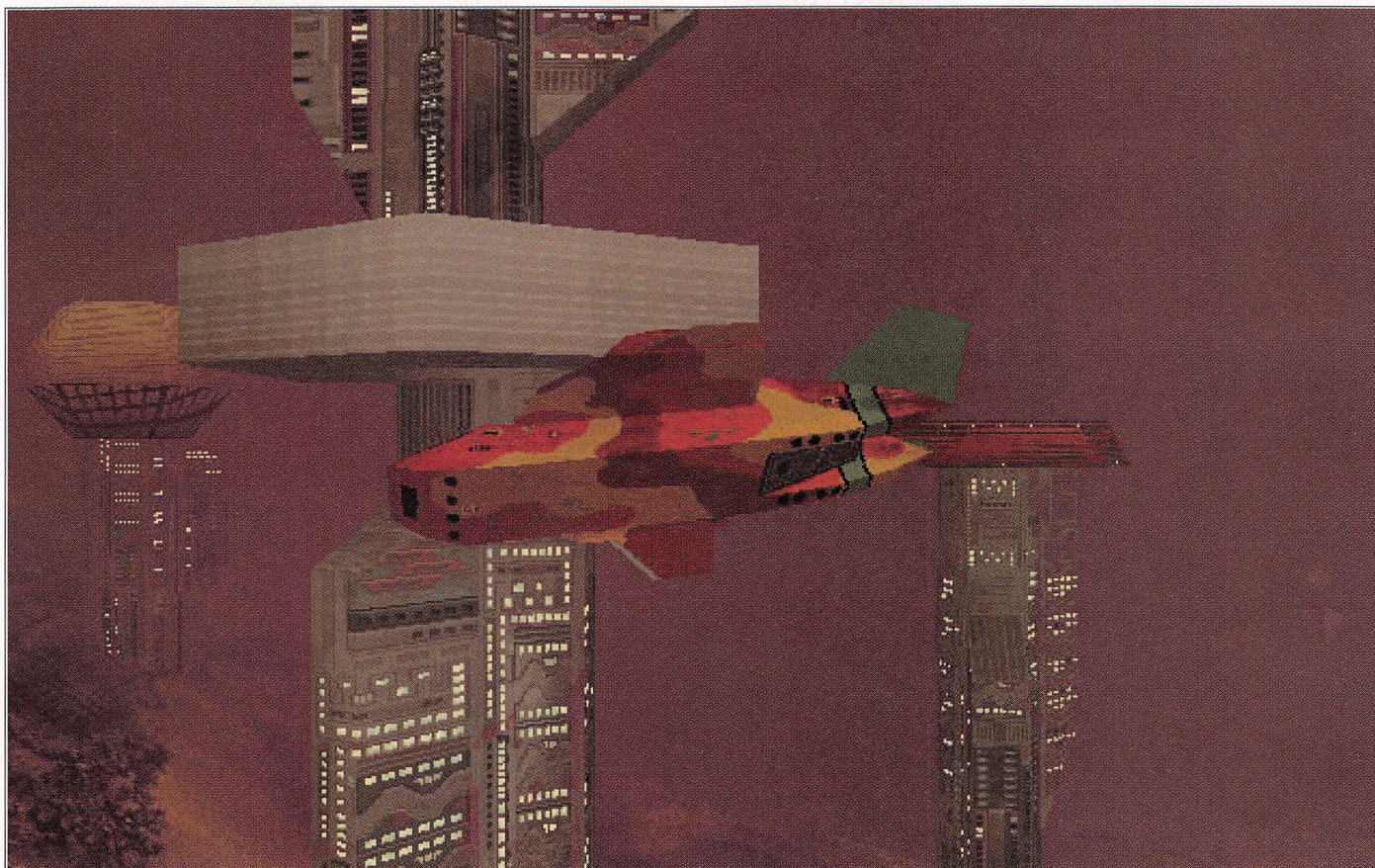
And it's not that we're hard on Hardwar because of Elite, either. Even if the classic game did not exist, Hardwar would still suck

Amanda Vanstone a buff and polish she still isn't going to be your ideal date now is she?

Design silliness

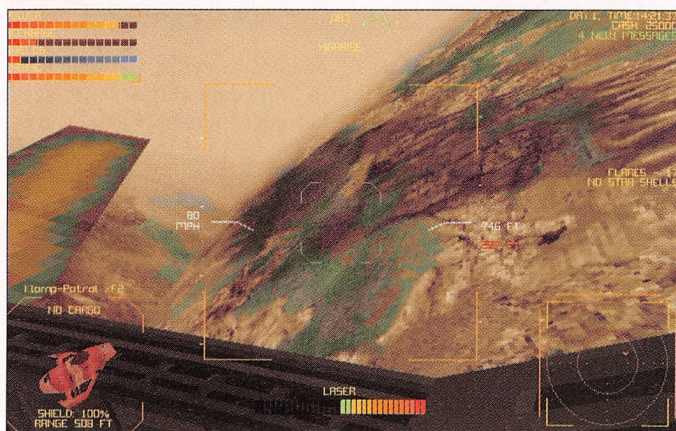
The main motivating factor in these sorts of games is the desire to upgrade and upgrade until your ship is so mean just pointing it in the direction of your enemies makes them soil their panties. Unfortunately your motivation is going to hit a brick wall very quickly in Hardwar. There are only four different Moth types in the game, with the only differences between them being their ability to mount a turret and

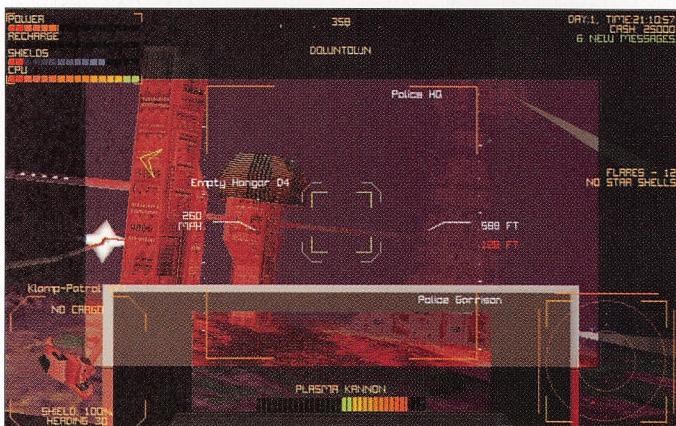
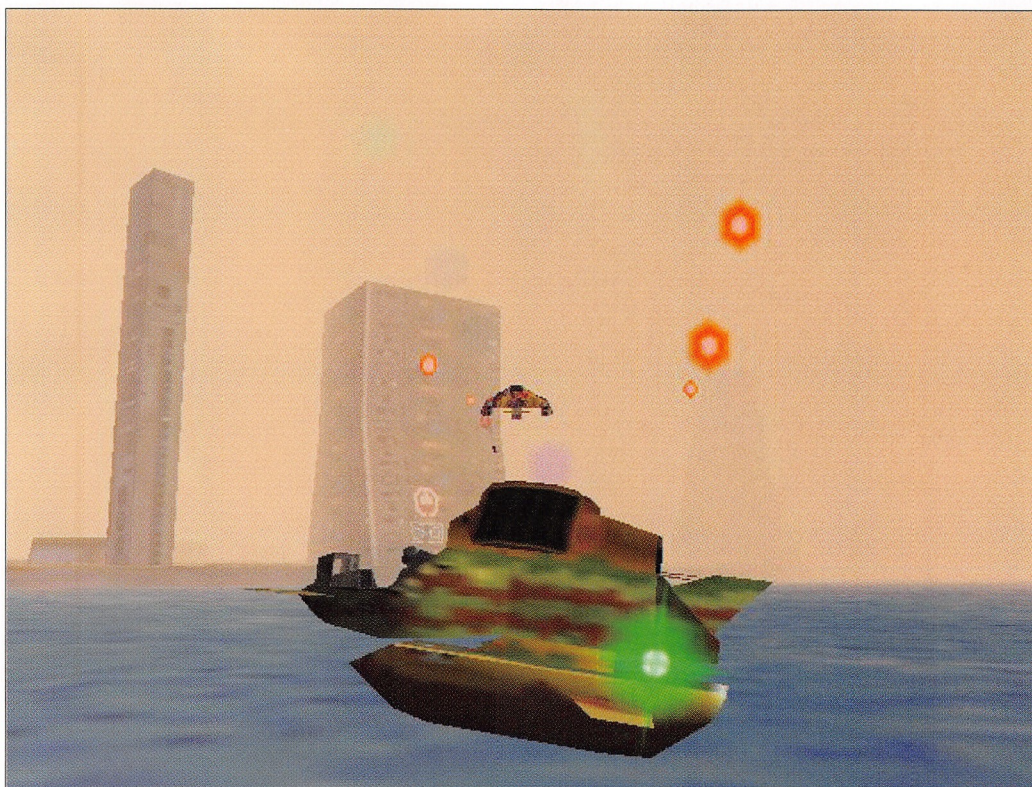




Goodbye gameplay, hello pretty graphics. More development time should have gone into a bigger game universe

bigger engines. Your choice of weapons is equally appalling: Three types of energy weapon and six or so different missile types. You can access all of them from the beginning of the game, especially if you get lucky and shoot down a pirate carrying a load of valuable narcotics, thereby removing one of the main motivating factors for playing! To make matters worse the game's designers have made missiles so expensive that I didn't end up using them at all. The cheapest missiles in the game work out costing \$500 a piece, while the most you can make from a bounty kill is \$2000, (but mostly around \$500 - \$1250). In other words it is simply not cost effective to use ANY of the missiles in the game (hmm solid game planning there guys, um who were your playtesters exactly? A bunch of poorly trained monkeys?)





Now to the business of making money. Forget all those long complex lists of goods and any even remotely sophisticated on board record keeping system, trade in Hardwar is about as basic as it comes. There are relatively few items to buy and sell and the variation in prices, considering that all this is taking place on one little moon, is almost insignificant. On top of that, some businesses only sell

one or two items, and then only in limited quantities so it becomes incredibly tedious trying to fill your Moth with cargo and then when you sell it you hardly make any profit. Your Moth can't remember prices in the various areas either so you are constantly faced with the utterly ridiculous task of writing them onto a note pad ("hey I'm sitting in front of a \$3000 computer running at millions

And there isn't even a decent flight model! Goddammit!

of instructions per second - WHY AM I WRITING IN A NOTE PAD?) In other words Hardwar is really not a trading game. The only way to get any sort of pleasure out of this title is to play as a bounty hunter, taking contracts at the various police stations around Titan, but even this method becomes dull very quickly as I am about to explain.

Floating golf buggies

The only other area of gameplay that is important to this genre is the 3D engine itself, particularly the combat physics and here again Hardwar is simply a bad joke. Firstly your Moths cannot roll, at all. Move your stick left and the whole craft moves to the left like some dodgy flight sim from the mid-eighties. The next thing you'll notice is the lightning speed at which your Moths move - not. Imagine a floating golf buggy and you've pretty much got the picture.

AI? AI? What's that? Wanna know how to beat every enemy in the game, right from the start, without upgrading at all? Just wait until they need to go to a light station to recharge (Moths are solar powered) While ships are recharging their AI turns off and you can just park yourself near them and blow them to pieces at your discretion. Even with the weakest weapons and the poorest tactics you can beat

PLUS⁺

<http://people.netcom.co.uk/i.bell/elite/>

Ian Bell (who co-created the original Elite with David Braben) hosts this page, where you can download a variety of versions of the worlds' best ever game.

the toughest pirates in the game. One word comes to mind - Pathetic! Couple these traits with the complete lack of interesting weapons and you have a combat engine that brings new meaning to the word pointless.

Hardwar is a title that fails to live up to any and all expectations. It has taken a rarely seen and fondly remembered genre and twisted it into an unrecognisable, unplayable mess and the developers should be soundly spanked by a volunteer force of ten thousand angry 'Elite' fans.

George Soropos

59%

Category Trading/Action
Players 1 - Multi
Publisher Gremlin
Price \$TBA
Rating TBA
Available Now

For Nice music from the UK's Warp Records provides a pleasant backdrop, um...not much else really.

Against The new Oxford English Dictionary defines boredom, pointless activity and mind sapping tedium with just one word - 'Hardwar'.

Need P133, 16Mb RAM, 4X CD

Want P233, 3D accelerator supporting DirectX, 32Mb RAM, and to really enjoy this you should have no life whatsoever.

Microsoft

I DEPLOYED MY GUYS USING THE TRANSPARENT MAP.

I TOLD MY GUYS TO ATTACK FROM BOTH FLANKS.

I KNOW WHERE THE TECH UPGRADE SECTOR IS.

I KNOW WHERE TO PLACE MY HOST STATION.

I KNOW WHERE THE POWER STATIONS ARE.

SO WHY AM I STILL DEAD?

I SAW A MYKONIAN CUBOID FORMATION.

I'M BEING SMART ABOUT MY MOVES.

I KNOW WHICH SECTORS ARE SECURE.



Use your map to deploy your troops and jump into any of 15 different types of vehicles.



Create your squadrons and set their level of aggressiveness to defend, attack, or raid.



Battle 5 unique alien and human enemy races.



INTERNET GAMING
ZONE
PLAY IT ON ZONE.COM/AUNZ

Hey mastermind, you're dead because you didn't get your hands dirty. In *Urban Assault*,™ you have to battle on the frenzied front lines at the same time you're strategizing the entire war. Of course, your years studying at military school will come in handy, but to win, you better warm up that trigger finger. Shoot your browser over to www.microsoft.com/games/urbanassault.

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URBAN ASSAULT™

UFO (a.k.a Flying Saucer)

It was inevitable - but what the hell took them so long? Here's a UFO flight sim, then.

It might sound a trifle hackneyed in today's X-Files world, it might seem like a bit of an attempt to cash in upon the current conspiracy theories/UFO culture that's been thrust upon us, but UFO is actually quite a decent game. It's not great, but it's not the low budget 'heap of crap' affair that you might have at first thought, as I certainly did.

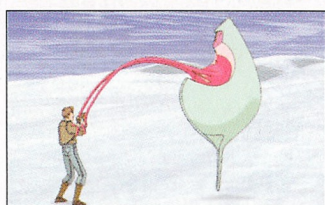
Oh no! Aliens!

So here's the wonderfully innovative and original storyline. Your 'close friend' Emily has been kidnapped by aliens for no appreciable reason. Rather than sell your story to the National Enquirer magazine and live comfortably off the proceeds, you (as the intrepid hero Boone Walker) decide to take a trip to the infamous Area 51, steal an alien spacecraft and then fly off to outer space to get her back.

Happily enough, when you do pop in to the Area 51 offices, all you find are three security guards armed with automatic machine guns, the bullets of which you easily evade as you run down a corridor. Hotly pursued by these amazingly inept guards, you happen upon one of the many alien spacecraft that have just been left lying about the place, jump in, press the conveniently placed 'go' button, and you're off to the heavens to search for whatsername.

Good aliens

And this isn't even part of the gameplay, no not at all. Rather this is what happens in the animated intro movie. When the game proper starts, things change a little. It's all a part of a conspiracy theory, you see (novel idea, hey?). It turns out that the aliens aren't the baddies after all - it is of course those dang government types that want to do...something bad to...someone...for...some reason. You still need to leave the Earth's atmosphere to find Emily, but it seems that you need a module of some sort to get to her. And some shady Government organisation



called the 'Advanced Security Agency' has these modules.

So what this all boils down to is that for much of the game you fly around Earth attempting to unravel the conspiracy, get your-

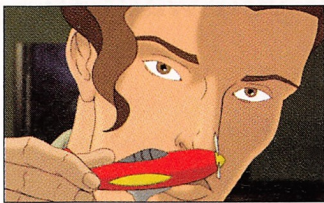
self a module, and rescue Emily from whatever she's gotten into. It's not all plain sailing (or flying, in this case) though - it'd be a pretty boring game if this was the case. To spice things up, the ASA sends planes, tanks, helicopters, and whatever else they can lay their hands on to blow you out of the sky before you discover their secrets. And believe me, you won't have an easy time finding out those secrets, because this is not an easy game.



Throughout the game you get these cool cartoon sequences to explain the story-line - a very nice touch

Saucerfight

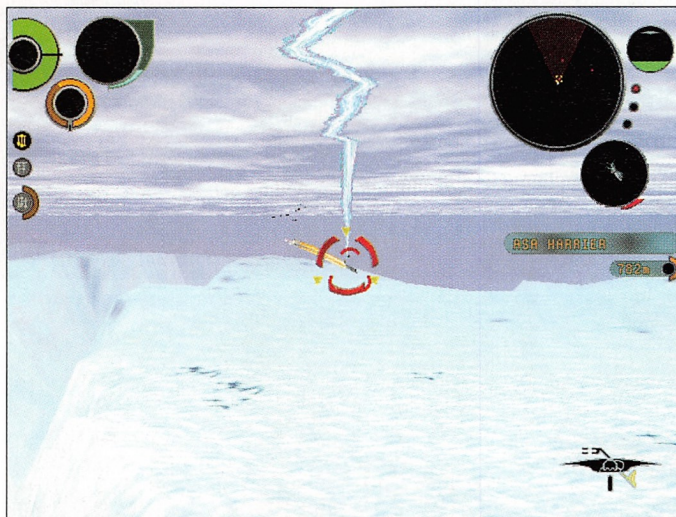
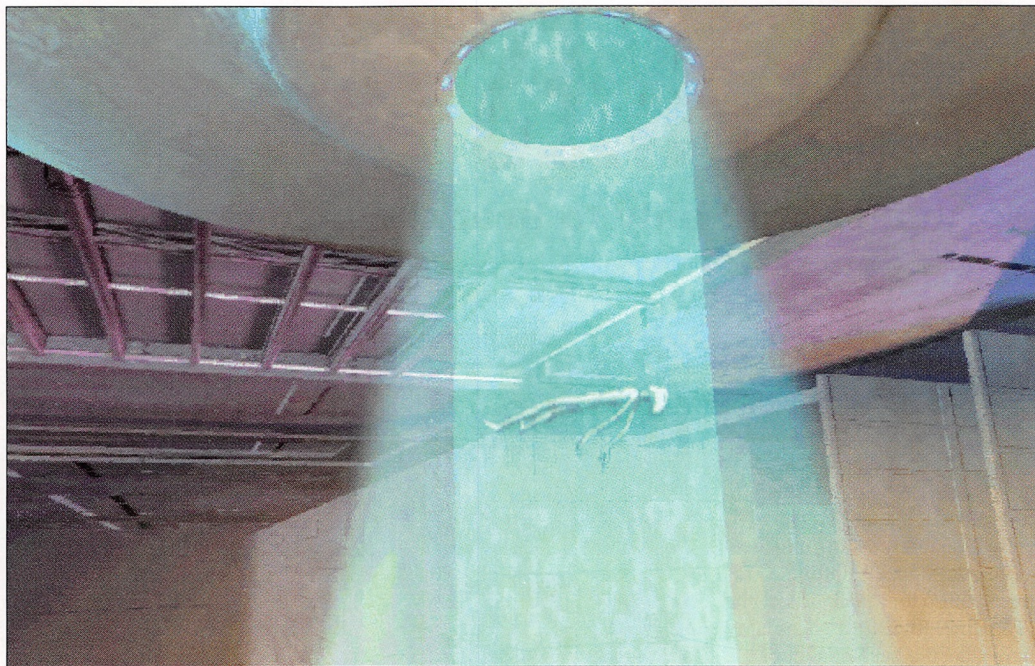
You begin your games by running through some training missions, designed to get you used to your nice new alien craft. And you will definitely need to run through the trainers, because your craft isn't like a normal airplane at all. Because it makes use of alien technology, annoying details like the laws of physics can be pretty much disregarded in the flight model. Your vessel is capable of turning 90 degrees with no inertia, hovering, and is able to 'fly' through all three axes of movement with no problems whatsoever. Of course, once you get the hang on flying around those conventional aircraft that the ASA sends against you aren't



going to stand much chance are they? Well, no they aren't, but this is far from an easy game. This is mainly because even if you do become fairly proficient in controlling your aircraft you will have a hell of a lot of enemy forces to deal with, even features like an auto tracking mode, so once you have an aircraft in your sights you can set your targeting receptacle to just follow that plane for as long as you like. All you have to do is press the fire button when you get bored - except, of course, for the 14 other planes all shooting missiles at you at once...

And therein lies the crux of the game. On the one hand you've got some fairly derivative gameplay (it's actually a lot like *Incoming*, minus the whizz-bang graphics), a hackneyed storyline which still manages to be interesting and fun to understand, and some very difficult missions. The missions are difficult because of the number of aircraft, boats, tanks and whatever else that's thrown against you, and also because you do need a fair degree of accuracy in moving your alien spacecraft about the place.

Getting the hang of controlling your craft is one thing, but there's another



(left) It's very handy to have the alien beam-o-death at your disposal. Oh how the tables have turned

nifty feature that makes things all that much more difficult - beaming people and things up from the ground. If you hover near an installation or vehicle on the ground you're able to scan it for usable matter (for your weapons systems), or for people/aliens to take them aboard for further study or to rescue them. The easiest way to deal with missions where you have to beam something up is to first dispense with the enemy craft so that you have time to stop, move in close to your target, scan it, and then beam whatever it is you need aboard. In theory this works fine, but in practice there always seems to be more and more waves of enemies coming for you, so you have to be quick, and this makes for some nail-biting 'abductions'.

Got the gameplay

Interestingly enough, *UFO* could be a sort of black to *Incoming's* white. They both have vaguely the same storyline and premise, but *UFO* has some

very amateurish graphics while Incoming features some of the best looking graphics anywhere; UFO has fun, fast, and challenging gameplay while Incoming...doesn't; UFO has a nice evolving storyline (albeit with the usual terrible script and dialogue, but we're all used to that by now) while Incoming puts the hack back in hackneyed. You see where I'm going, don't you? Incoming has all the latest whizz bang graphics, but UFO has the gameplay that Incoming was searching for. If only the two could be merged together - think of the possibilities! Ah well, even as it stands with its blah graphics and difficult gameplay, UFO is still quite good. It's not great, but then again it's not terrible either. It's the kind of thing that you'd be happy to find on a mates computer so that you could play it for a while, but it's not the kind of thing that you would want to rush down to the store to buy immediately.

Gareth Jones

73%

Category	Action saucer sim
Players	1
Publisher	Gremlin
Price	\$TBA
Rating	G8+
Available	Now

For It might not have the whizz-bangery of other like titles, but this is actually fun to play, at least for a while. Learning to pilot an alien ship is challenging, but interesting and different. The into animation is lovely too...

Against ...apart from the dialogue. Also, the game is quite hard, even on the easy difficulty level, and the graphics really are well below par.

Need P133, 16MB, Win 95/98, 4xCD

Want P166, 32MB RAM,
3Dfx card

3D SUPPORT

All Direct3D cards

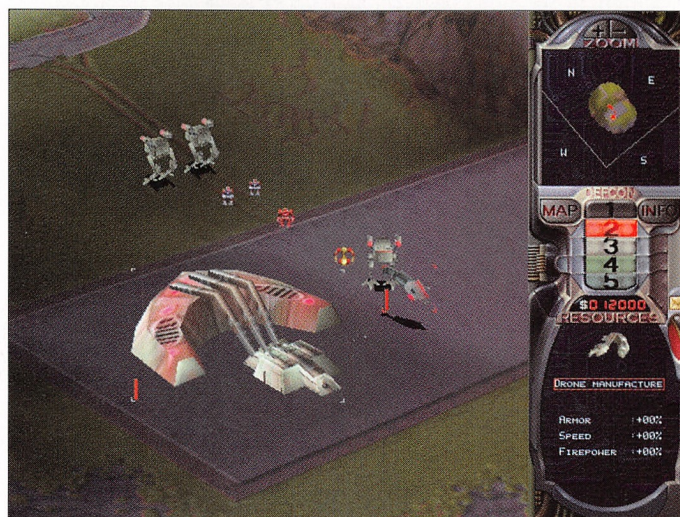
WARGAMES

Worth a look, if only to hear the memorable line "do you want to play a game?"

Allright! It's a new Real Time Strategy title! With revolutionary 3D graphics! Based on a big budget blockbuster! Er.. Yay? No, not this time sorry. It's a bit of a yawn really. I take it most of you jaded gamers have had it up to the cranium with poor knock-offs of the RTS game. Rightfully so, as there's been a heck of a lot of drivel hitting the shelves lately. What're we up to now in the RTS count? Does anyone actually care any more? Hang about.

3D weather?

Real 3D weather effects that dictate the type of strategy you'll use! Okay, my interest in Wargames is rising slightly. Hold on a minute.. Based on which movie? Wargames? After a bit of a scratch through the recesses of my dysfunctional memory banks, I recall Wargames to be that classic movie where a lone hacker (Matthew Broderick) cracks NORAD (the US defence force), and gets acquainted with WOPR (the super-computer/program that runs all those Xmas decorations you see in command centres). Basically Broderick inadvertently causes WOPR to target the US missiles on Russia (who react in the expected manner). It's then up to him to physically break into NORAD and fix the ensuing mess. Although it was released way back in 1983, it



A squad of Brodericko-class mechs converge upon a W.O.P.R. of a thing.

unit make-up. WOPR features more technologically superior units, but are much more expensive and take longer to produce, looking sort of like a Robocop and Mechwarrior hybrid.

Gameplay is totally familiar, as mentioned. You build a base, produce units (up to 16 units can be queued for production at a time), and launch a head-on attack of the opposing forces on the map. Money is earned by producing the hacker unit,

sending it to a Command Centre, and setting it to steal funds. In fact, the only real difference to other RTS's, is the inclusion of the Defcon meter and email. Relating ratio of NORAD forces to WOPR, Defcon 1 means the opposing force has dominance in unit number. Defcon 2 indicates a growth in the strength of your forces. A completely trivial relic of the film, the Defcon meter does little for gameplay. The email feature simply notifies of mission objective changes and the like. Other than that, Wargames is a very simple action strategy game.



VIRUS ALERT

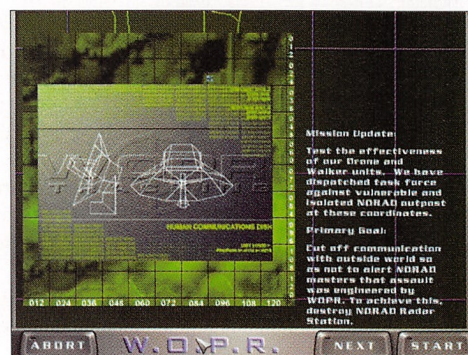
Do NOT run the electronic registration option. There's a particularly fashionable virus - Margurg in that program, and it will infect your system if executed. The actual game files are clean though, so you can still run the game and be okay as long as you don't register (heh, there's another incentive not to bother). If you already have however, go to www.wargamesmgm.com now for instructions on how to clean your system.

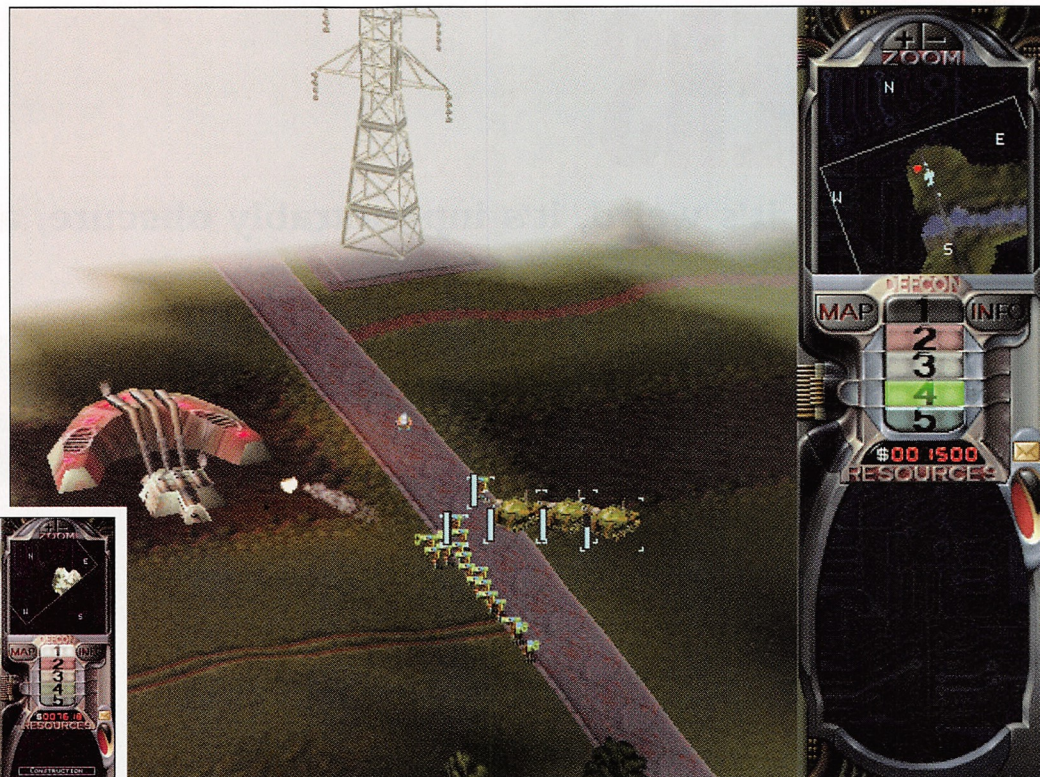
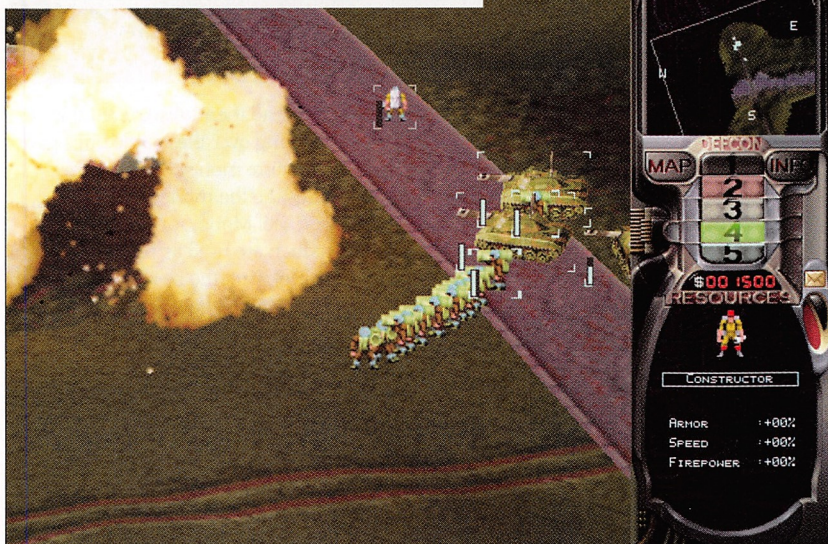
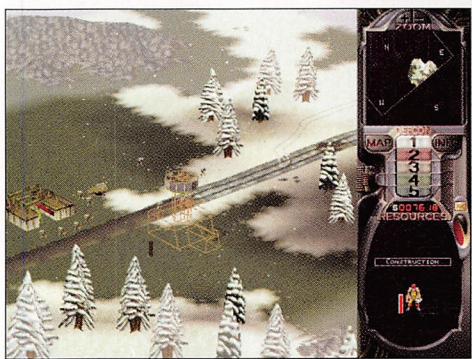
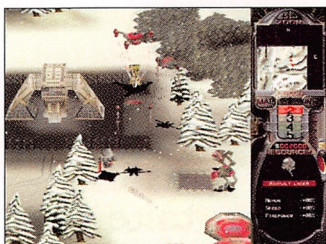
was way ahead of its time and is a must see for all those that read this very magazine.

Double-beef WOPR

You command either the NORAD forces or the naughty WOPR (as true to the film). A big nod of approval comes with the inclusion of over a hundred different units to play with. Featuring air, ground, and naval units, Wargames most resembles C&C in concept. And that's not just a casual name drop either. Wargames plays a heck of a lot like C&C, and although the

MGM title is visually and technologically more impressive, I'd rather play C&C. There is such a thing as drowning in too many units. There's the fast jeep with poor armour designed for scouting, the powerful-in-packs rocket launcher soldier and the terrifying but slow and cumbersome tank of NORAD. Both sides too, require a different approach due to the difference in





Arcade strategy

With only cash flow to worry about (you only have to get the hacker in the building once to get him diverting funds to your account, and in my experience enemy units have yet to disrupt this process), and an almost condition-free approach to base construction, the only thing left to do is to work on building up

your forces for that tank rush. No awesome cut scenes, nor involving storyline to spur you along. All you need is a primal urge to annihilate the enemy, level by level. Oh dear.

Wargames looks a lot better than it plays. Completely 3D, the units and scenery are nicely detailed and blow up in a satisfying manner. Watching an artillery shell light up the snow with a dull red sheen as it flies above it will make you weak at the knees. In fact, with a graphics accelerator Wargames is a visually pleasing affair. Not anywhere as detailed as Tiberian Sun (at least what we've seen in screenshots so far), Wargames resembles Myth in its simplicity. Which brings me at a loss explaining the sluggishness

of the game. Played on a computer with the recommended specs and a Diamond 3D, Wargames feels entirely retarded. Being a reflex-based game, there's absolutely no reason why units should move so slowly, nor an excuse for not including some sort of game speed option like seen in Warcraft II. At least you can catch up with some light reading as you await your units arrival at the selected destination.

Characterless characters

If you took away the Wargames license from the game, you'd hardly notice the difference. That's because the game has hardly anything to do with the movie, nor does it capture any of the movie's character. It's just another reason for having two sides locking horns. Which is a pity, as the movie was chock full of thrills, computers running amok and military muscle - perfect fodder for a game like this. Even then, what's left behind is a very basic RTS'er. At times enjoyable, but rarely exciting or satisfying. Definitely not for the hardened RTS enthusiast.

March Stepanik

In the future, you will only be able to see 100 metres into the distance

68%

Category Real Time Strategy
Players 1-4
Publisher MGM Interactive
Price \$TBA
Rating M
Available Now

For Decent RTS play. Coloured lighting and dynamic lighting put to great effect.

Against No cohesive element. With a faster game engine and a bit of ingenuity, Wargames could have been. Instead, nothing new that's worthwhile. Lacks any real excitement. No Matthew Broderick.

Need Win 95, P133, 16MB RAM, 52MB HD.

Want PII, 32MB+ RAM, Graphics accelerator.

3D SUPPORT
Most major cards

PLUS⁺ IS NOT A GAME

WARGAMES

SPECIAL NOTICE TO ALL PC WARGAMES USERS

www.wargamesmgm.com/

Read the official apology for the virus.

VANGERS

It's Russian, it's weird, it's impenetrably obscure, and you take part in Eleerections. 'Nuff said.

In terms of weirdness and obscurity, this has to be one of the most 'out there' games I've ever encountered. It borrows elements from epic trading sims like *Elite*, it borrows elements from top down arcade racers like *Death Rally*, and features a manual so deliberately incomprehensible as to put you right off the game from the start. And then it just gets weirder...

Russian science fiction

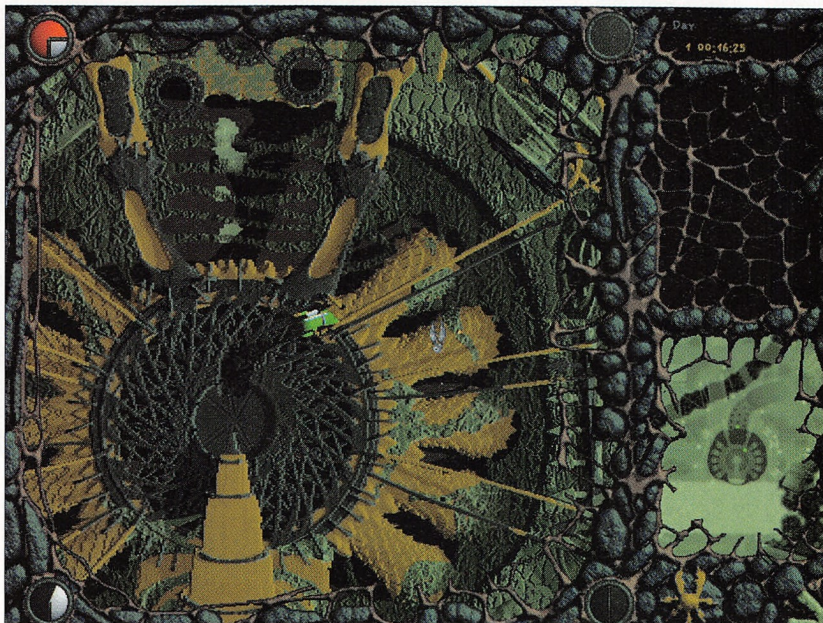
Developed by a Russian outfit called Buka Entertainment, the manual might as well have been written in Russian. It's not, it's written in the language of the Vangers (but it might as well have been Russian). You see, you're a Vanger, a hybrid human/alien type thing, and your task is to make sense of your environment and the worlds around you. In keeping with this theme, the manual and in game help/instructions are written from an alien perspective. You're told to solve a tabu-task, one of which is apparently to take part in an eleerection (or something), where you take a...thing...from one tunnel to another so that it can...spawn or something.

It's not that it's a badly written manual. It's more of a case that part of the game is to come to terms and understand (at least vaguely) what the hell the terms are in the game and the manual - an innovative though annoying

touch. I can't help but think that this is going to appeal to a small group of gamers and just annoy the hell out of the rest. I fall into the "rest" category. I tried to like it, I was quite excited at the prospect of playing and review the game because the premise sounded interesting, but it just ended up annoying and frustrating me.

(Lots of) perseverance pays off

However, with a bit (or, more truthfully,



Ah, those wacky Russians. It's all a plot to annoy us until we turn to Communism!

ly, a lot) of perseverance, things do gradually fall into place, and there are creatures (eleepods) that help you out (at least to a degree). Essentially, the game is played from a top down perspective and your task (at least for the most part) is to trade material between escaves (sort of like caves where the eleepods reside), taking Nymbos from one place and bringing back Phlegma in your toolled up Vanger (vehicle). It's just your basic supply and demand thing, though you'd be surprised at how long it took me just get to this level of understand-

ing. And then I discovered that running over these little bugs gave me more money. Because the bugs are the money in the game, you see. Money, or beetle-things (which are used as money in the game), isn't the be all and end all of the game, however. Overall, you need to travel between different worlds, solving a number of tabu-tasks as the means to acquire the knowledge to travel to those worlds. There are a number of vehicles that you can eventually



choose from (once you have enough...beetle-things, of course) with differing abilities - some are primarily for trading, some are fast and small, others fit somewhere in the middle. There's also a large range of weaponry to choose from, but of course they all have weird explanations so you really have to try them out for a while before you realise just what their purpose is.





53%

Category Racing/Trading/Interpreting sim
Players 1
Publisher Interactive Magic
Price \$TBA
Rating TBA
Available Now

For Original idea, executed well, and some nice graphics. There is a hell of a lot of a story-line too...

Against ...which is one of the biggest hurdles to overcome. It will take you a good few hours of solid playing and reading before you even begin to understand the terminology used, and the aims of the game. Your view of your Vanger can easily become obscured by the environment, which is very annoying.

Need P133, 16MB RAM, 4xCD

Want P166, 32MB RAM, patience



turned on its head again. There is a nice sense of satisfaction when you do figure something out, and it was a vastly different experience from most gameplaying, though overall I can't help but think that this is really only going to appeal to a small group of people who have the temerity, attention span, and single mindedness to trawl through the arcane terminology and figure out what's happening, and then get used to moving around in the ter-

rain (which is an art in itself), and then progress into the even deeper mysteries of the main tasks - to find out what's happening in the world. For those who think they would have the inclination to take the time then they will be rewarded with a decent game. However it was just, overall, too much for me, and I suspect that this will be the same for many others as well.

Gareth Jones

(top) Yeah, but what's a Nymbo, and where the *\$%! is Podish??

It's all too much!

It's an interesting idea for a game, and it is appealing, but the end result is that it doesn't quite work. There's just too much to decipher, too much to try and understand, and once you think you're getting the hang of something it all just gets

PLUS+ Help for Vangers

www.vangers.com/vangers/hints/general.html
 The Vangers help site. You'll need it

INSURRECTION: Starcraft Add-on

No! This is NOT a cheap compilation of downloads, it's good! More Starcraft, more Starcraft...

Once upon a time in PowerPlayland we truly loved real time strategy expansion packs. Not because they "add a whole new dimension to your favourite game" (marketing blurb # 4) but because they presented an opportunity to destroy some near useless CD-ROM's in an entertaining manner. Burning, melting and even a cruel death by being tossed and lost in Gareth's car of eternal chocolate and McDonalds wrappers. Yes there have been some sinkers over time, the worst sinners containing ingredients along the lines of throw a tonne of crap levels together and stir gently with boredom. Insurrection's claims of 102 new multiplayer maps immediately started a bad taste forming in my mouth, but fear not intrepid Starcrafters, this is one non-official expansion pack that doesn't deserve to be melted in a vat of boiling fast food fat.

Blizzard blessed

Insurrection has gained the big stamp of approval from Blizzard. Now before you get visions of Insurrection's designers handing over a big fat cheque and the Blizzard boys smiling back without even looking at the game, think again. The included 30 mission campaign is of darn good quality. Just like the original, each of the three sides gets ten missions each, and again like the original there is an exciting, well developed story flowing throughout the missions.

Brontes IV is a Confederate colony well away from the main Terran-Zerg-Protoss conflict. A patrol goes missing, and before a Terran colonist can shout "Ma,

there's a Zergling in my moonshine still!" there is uncovered a wicked plot of renegade zealot humans wanting to become "Genetically Pure" with the Zerg. What follows is a Protoss invasion and lots of twists and turns. While no new battle units are included in the game, the designers have inserted new hero characters that keep the missions entertaining. Be prepared though for lots of time to get through Insurrection's campaign, as the difficulty level is aimed at the Starcraft veteran. Most of the missions start with the enemy well entrenched on the map, so big time construction and many long battles are part of winning the day.

Maze missions

My only complaint are missions in the vein of taking a set force into an underground Terran complex and playing the "travel through the maze of corridors for a couple of hours" scenario. If you played Red Alert and didn't like the indoor missions, you'll know what to expect at these maps.

Multiplayer maps galore

The 102 multiplayer are of good quality without offering anything new and remarkable like new terrain tilesets. Unless you enjoy trawling the Net for numerous maps only to find a lot of crap ones, a good alternative is scoring Insurrection and knowing some thought on multiplayer balance went into the design.



There's not a hell of a lot that's new here, but the maps and missions are of high quality

All the better for playing on Battlenet. Hosting a game on Battlenet will automatically transfer your Insurrection maps to players that don't have them. Auto-map swapping, another thumbs-up Battlenet feature.

More to come

Blizzard's official Starcraft expansion, Brood Wars makes an appearance at year's end. It will no doubt over-

shadow Insurrection for excitement with new units and terrain, but until then Starcraft players can do well to treat themselves to an A-grade quality campaign and easy access to some nice maps.

Pete Sharpe



80 PC PowerPlay

79%

Category RTS expansion
Players 1-8
Publisher Aztech New Media
Price TBA
Rating M
Available Now

For A campaign that has actually been designed, not just a few missions slapped tougher.

Against If you thrive on opening your newly purchased game box and look forward to new units etc... well this doesn't fit the bill.

Need Original Starcraft.

Want A love for single player Starcraft.

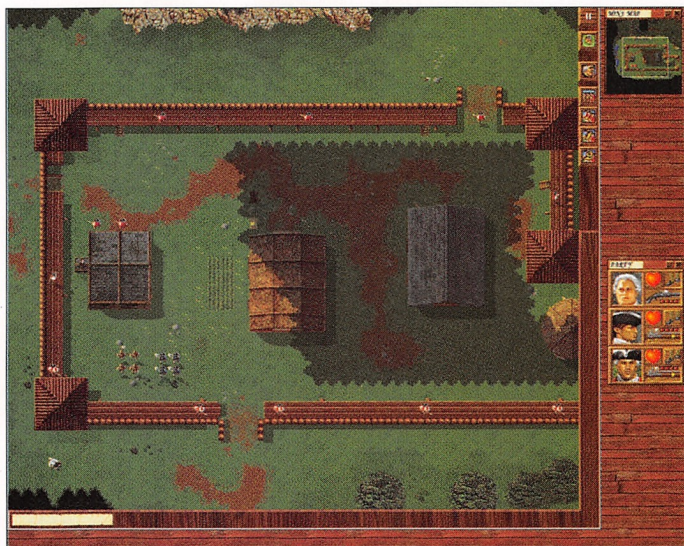
PLUS⁺



www.aztech.com
 Terran mission 4 has a whacked-out difficulty level. It's a fault. Come here to get the patch.

FIELDS OF FIRE

Despite adding some new and innovative elements to the RTS genre, fatal gameplay flaws make this a mediocre release at best.

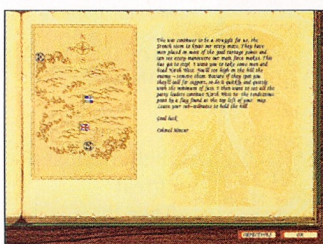


What do you say about a game that really does have some innovative features and a pleasant interface, that has real potential to be an enjoyable and interesting game but fails rather dismally? It's a bit sad, because it doesn't feel right to castigate a games' developers, but even though they did try something new and have some good ideas, the game just doesn't work.

What you get in FoF is a blending of Real Time Strategy genres with elements of Role Playing, as you guide your men and troops through the battles between the French, the English, and the Native American forces for governance over the region which is now the area around the American/Canadian border. It's not your usual 'build up a base, send out troops to swarm over the enemy' type scenario though.

Disastrously silly troops

Instead, at the start of the game you choose your character from a number of people, and stick with that person throughout the entire war. At the start of each mission you begin in your fort, with orders to report to the command hut for mission orders. Before you head there it's often a good idea to grab some of the fort defence staff and head out into the wilderness, because you start out with very little money, and the



only way to accrue more is to kill some of the local wildlife, like bears, wolves and deer, and then sell the skins to the local store. Once you've got a few gold coins in your pocket you can buy medical kits, weapon upgrades, explosives, man traps, and so on. Even though this would seem to be quite far from a realistic simulation, it's a nice idea and adds a level of immersion into the game. However, this is let down by the terribly poor pathing technique used by the programmers (it is, at best, rudimentary. At worst; horrendous), where your man and your troops will get stuck or lost at the drop of a hat.

RPG elements

Anyway, once you enter the command hut and listen to your



Another game to add to the "but it could have been really good" category. It's not

game with poor AI, flawed pacing, a very chunky engine (chugged along on a P2 266 w/64MB), and what could have

been very enjoyable and innovative gameplay reduced to a rather boring point and click affair.

Gareth Jones

briefing you select up to six comrades to join you on your mission. Each person has different skill levels, attributes, and abilities, and this is nicely done and well presented. After that you head off to the rendezvous point for transport to the battlefield. But it's not nearly as quick or as clean as that - you actually have to tell your troops to head toward the point, and then sit back and wait while they wander around, get stuck, head the wrong way, and gradually crawl towards the point where your mission begins. There is an option to set the game speed, but at maximum speed the pace of movement is tolerable (though it becomes very hard to control the actions of your troops. Catch 22, really).

No real depth

What really lets this game down (along with the terribly poor AI and pathing) is that for all the talk about the role playing elements and resource management aspects, there just really isn't much there. You can wander out and shoot some wildlife for skins, and then you do your mission. That's about it. And while the missions do entail some strategic thinking (taking the high ground, etc), essentially you just select your troops as a group and click on the opposition, with the odd bit of manoeuvring here and there. It is a good idea for a game, adding personalities to your troops is a great way to involve the player, and adding open ended resource gathering elements could have been great. The end result is that this is a

53%

Category Real Time Strategy
Players 1-4
Publisher Empire Interactive
Price \$TBA
Rating TBA
Available Now

For Fantastic! New ideas for the RTS genre, elements of role playing, an evolving ecosystem, funny character voices, and vaguely historically accurate scenarios.

Against Doh! Good ideas gone to waste. Let down by poor AI, terrible pathing, only a veneer of role playing, a game engine that chugs on anything less than a Cray, and silly pointless boring bits that should have been taken out.

Need P100, 16MB RAM, 2xCD

Want Want: P2 266, 64MB RAM, 4MB Video Card, 12xCD

WARLORDS III: Dark Lords Rising

Australian maestros SSG pump out another in the Warlords series. It's great, even if it is only a full priced expansion pack

OK, let's start with the fact that the Warlords series is terrific. Developed by the Aussie kings of strategy SSG, Warlords has always found the sweet spot between simplicity, yet totally engrossing conquer and build gameplay. Warlords III: Dark Lords Rising is a sequel to Warlords III: Reign of Heroes. Well, sequel is probably a strong word as this is more of an expansion masquerading as a stand alone title. For the recommended retail price of \$89.95, you get the original Warlords III plus this newly improved edition complete with extra maps, campaigns and boosted AI. Being a Warlords fan (and past purchaser of the original version III) you might be asking yourself if paying full price for some nice little add-ons is really a value for money situation? The short answer is no, but Dark Lords Rising can't be consigned to the bin of crap that easily.

Big Bane's Back!

The first bit of good news are four new campaigns, and they aren't bad either. Lord Bane's revenge continues the story after old Bany boy's defeat back in Warlords III: ROH. Bane is back, and he ain't happy. The Horn Of Kor has the interesting premise of a King obsessed with curing his infertility with a fabled magical horn of randiness. Drakdum takes us to Dwarf land, where Gnolls have invaded and settled an ancient Dwarven fort. In the fourth campaign Thalassia, you take the role of the recently dead king's nephew Prince Alaric. Taking the throne in troubled times, you must keep your kingdom secure from the forces of subversion and general nastiness. Not quite as epic as the original Bane Wars story, these campaigns are still very playable and keep the interest up throughout.

Plenty of new stuff

Being that heroes, units and spells make up the crux of gameplay it's logical that these



More turn based dungeons and dragons shenanigans. Great stuff! Pity about the price though

AI; better but still not great

Then there is the AI. Warlords III: ROH had at times a pretty rusty old AI that was not exactly a challenge to experi-

enced players. The new and improved AI really isn't that big a jump. The computer still leaves magic objects lying about on occasion, walks past undefended forts and just generally doesn't make itself menacing enough. That doesn't mean there isn't fun to be had in single player mode. Bump up the stats of the AI players a bit, enable options like Fog of War and play on large maps...then prepare for a challenge.

Value for money?

If this had been priced as an expansion (look at the incredible value that was the TA: Core Contingency add-on) Darklords Rising would be a must get. Otherwise, unless you want the (slightly) improved AI for single player, or the editor functions, this latest in the Warlords saga might have you feeling a bit gipped on being slugged full price for what is essentially Warlords 3.5.

Pete Sharpe



89%

Category	Turn based strategy
Players	1-8(LAN) 1-4(Internet)
Publisher	SSG
Price	\$89.95
Rating	TBA
Available	Now
For	It's Warlords, it's lovely. If you like straight forward strategy and late nights but haven't jumped into Warlords yet, now is the time.
Against	Drop 10 points off the score if you already have Warlords III, as this is not an underwear expander in the excitement stakes.
Need	P75, 16Mb RAM, WIN95.
Want	P133 for 1024x768 graphics mode.

ADRENIX

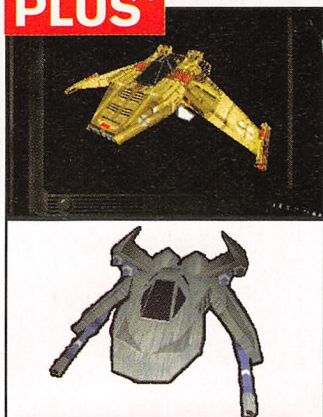
Controlled like a FPS with the mouse and with tasty 3D textures, Adrenix just about cuts the grade.

Great! The story to Adrenix is much easier digested than most. You play the highly decorated ace pilot (again). You shoot down nasty rebels (etc) conspiring against the glorious Medtech. A peculiar event uncovers the unsavoury pursuits of Medtech (etc), and you want to do something about it. Rather than fighting for the cause of humanity though, your agenda is somewhat less global. Medtech have pinched the love of your life and the only way to get her back is with the aid of the rebels. So you side with them. Your opinion of the rebel organisation hasn't improved much since Medtech's evil plans surfaced, while the rebels look at you with a similar air of disgust. After all, you did shoot down their comrades. Heck! The potential for intriguing story development is here in abundance!

That Descent game

The reason the story got a whole paragraph rather than a mere few sentences is due to Adrenix's almost uncanny resemblance to the classic Descent series of first person shooters.

PLUS+



Take a look at these two ships. Look a tad similar? It's called the 'Let's make our game look like another really popular one so that we might make a few quid' tactic. Note the blatant lack of any attempt to disguise this tactic. In general, avoid games like these.

Something needs to set it apart. It's quite shameless really. You pilot a familiar looking ship. You fly through large cavernous levels with plenty of claustrophobia-inducing tunnels in first-person, with a complete 360 degrees of movement. You collect shield power ups, health power ups, and weapon power ups. You shoot down enemies, most in the form of other ships and the occasional bot.

All this is, of course, second in comparison to the magic Descent displays. Each of the above aspects fall below the level set by Interplay's respective



Ahh, thank God for innovative ideas in the gaming industry! When someone does something good, copy it!

simply make it through alive, some ask for reconnaissance, others require the destruction of specific military hard points, and the odd couple demand search, rescue and escort services. Each mission briefing

enlightens you on your quest to find your kidnapped love, with a generous cut-scene every few missions to really flesh out the story.

Thanks to this structure, Adrenix becomes a playable game, and at times, quite enjoyable. The second difference is that the game engine borrows heavily from the Quake model (+mlook), and thus offers a painless way of controlling your ship. In this way, half the challenge of the game isn't being able to master the controls.

Needs a bit

With the redeeming mission-based aspect of the game, Adrenix still faces a few hurdles in its quest to offer a religious gaming experience. Firstly, the game is completely linear. Secondly, the environment, minus the mission objective targets, are oblivious to the damage caused by our arsenal. Thirdly, the physics model leaves a bit to be desired. Shoot an enemy, it

counterpart, and all this becomes blatantly obvious after only a few minutes in the game's first level. The weapons are lack lustre. The primary weapon is the ship's cannon whose discharge is annoyingly invisible. The graphics, even in Direct 3D mode, hardly push the gaming envelope and your accelerator will hardly work up a sweat. The textures are highly varied though, so that each level, while linking to the previous one, still offers something different.

There is plot

Well thank the gaming gods that Adrenix isn't just a poor rip-off of Descent. The main difference here is that Adrenix is a mission based game, rather than a 'shoot the heck out of anything that moves and exit the level calmly' kind of game. The beautiful thing is, these missions and their objectives closely tie-in with that story that I was harping on about earlier. Some levels require you to



plummets towards a river of green goo. Rather than a splash (or even a plop), the ship explodes on impact. It sort of kills that whole immersion factor of gaming.

Adrenix remains however a playable 3D action shooter with a more strategic edge to it. Complete ignorance of the Descent phenomenon would definitely help.

March Stepnik

72%

Category 1st Person Shooter
Players 1-8
Publisher Playmates
Price \$TBA
Rating G8+
Available Now

For Smooth control. Complex, multiple objective missions.

Against Lack of originality. Linear game design.

Need P166, 16 MB RAM, 40MB HDD, Win 95

Want P200, graphics accelerator, 32MB RAM



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GAMES ONLINE

MICRO MACHINES V3

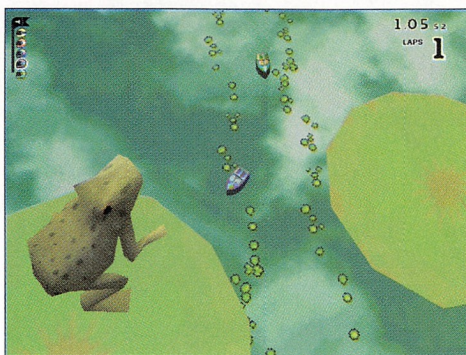
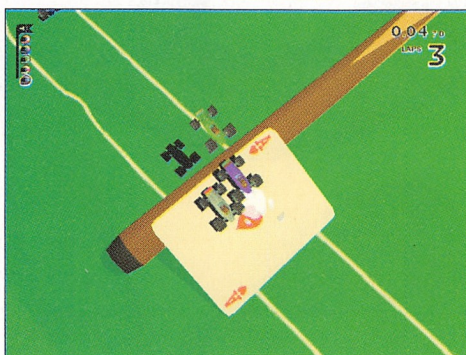
It's the best matchbox car racing sim ever! Well, it's actually the only one, but it's still good.

There's no type of gamer that gains more respect from us here at Powerplay than the dedicated racing sim purist. The guy who with a combination of welding gear and old Kingswood parts sets up a racing cockpit in front of the PC is not just an urban myth...its true. We love it. While not being in the same league, I've been known to make loud "Vroooming" noises and shake my computer chair from side to side during auto games, so I count myself as a probationary speed freakster. All of this behaviour probably first exhibited itself in early childhood when a Matchbox car was first given the heave-ho across a dining room Daytona course. Mum's best China, empty toilet paper rolls and some scared looking goldfish living in the stunt jump aquarium were all likely course additions. No need to let these memories languish, as Micro Machines V3 is all about novelty vehicles racing around the domesticated bliss of the golden years of our childhood.

Peanut butter jump ramps...

The previous Micro Machine games have been a favourite since the days of the 8-bit consoles. While the idea of racing novelty cars around pool tables, kitchens and backyard gardens sounds damn wacky, its also a fine evening's entertainment. Especially with a bunch of mates all crowded around the screen trying to out race and bump each other off peanut butter jump ramps, cereal box chicanes and the like. This newest version has been a big hit in European Playstation cir-

cles and now inevitably makes its way into PC land. The first thing that strikes you are the fabulous graphics. While the overhead view has been carried over, the flat 2D graphics have been replaced with 3D rendered courses filled with tremendous detail. Kitchen sinks and bars of soap have never looked better.



Stupid 'smart camera'

The designers have done a great impersonation of Santa Claus and included 32 different vehicles with 48 tracks to race them on. No bad thing. You can practise on any course you wish, but in single player competitive mode you have to start at track one and win races track by track to advance through the game. Arguably annoying, but Micro Machines is really a multiplayer game at heart anyway. Screaming at an AI-controlled turbo charged Morris-Mini as it powerslides you off a toothbrush into oblivion

doesn't have the same satisfaction as headbutting your mate seated next to you when he does the same thing. Apart from time trials the main multiplayer mode involves trying to race ahead one screen length thus relegating your competitor to losing a point. Lose enough points and its race over. Sadly, talk of multiplayer brings up Micro Machine's worst feature. The viewpoint above the track auto-adjusts during racing, but

90% of the time it's set way too close to the action which gives a terribly restricted view of what's coming up ahead. Until you learn a track extremely well, get ready to crash over and over again. This high learning curve is OK if you put the time in, but really detracts in multiplayer unless all the participants are experts.

Micro Machines is a compulsive game, but would have been a lot better if that damned camera would have been set to give a wider view of the track. An "almost there" classic.

Pete Sharpe

80%

Category Racing
Players 1-6 Same PC. 1-8 LAN
Publisher Codemasters
Price \$69.95
Rating G
Available Now

For Multiple joystick and keyboard modes to accommodate squeezing up to 6 players around a single PC. Just keep the deodorant handy. Numerous powerups such as bump-em-off the racetrack force-fields make for excitement.

Against Solo play is only half the fun. Cheezy comedy and sound effects wear thin very quickly.

Need P120, 16Mb RAM, WIN95

Want P166, 32Mb RAM

3D SUPPORT

Direct 3D -3D card with 4Mb memory required.



ARMY MEN

Now this is getting silly... A game based on our childhood plastic toys? Alright!

I was a leader of men once. Platoons of fine young plastic troops at my command, waging constant war against the forces of darkness on the blood soaked battlefield of my bedroom carpet. The men appreciated my tactical skill and ruthless brutality, and never failed to be inspired by a quick prod with the soldering iron. Until now, I thought that these days had gone forever but thanks to 3DO my plastic warriors live again!

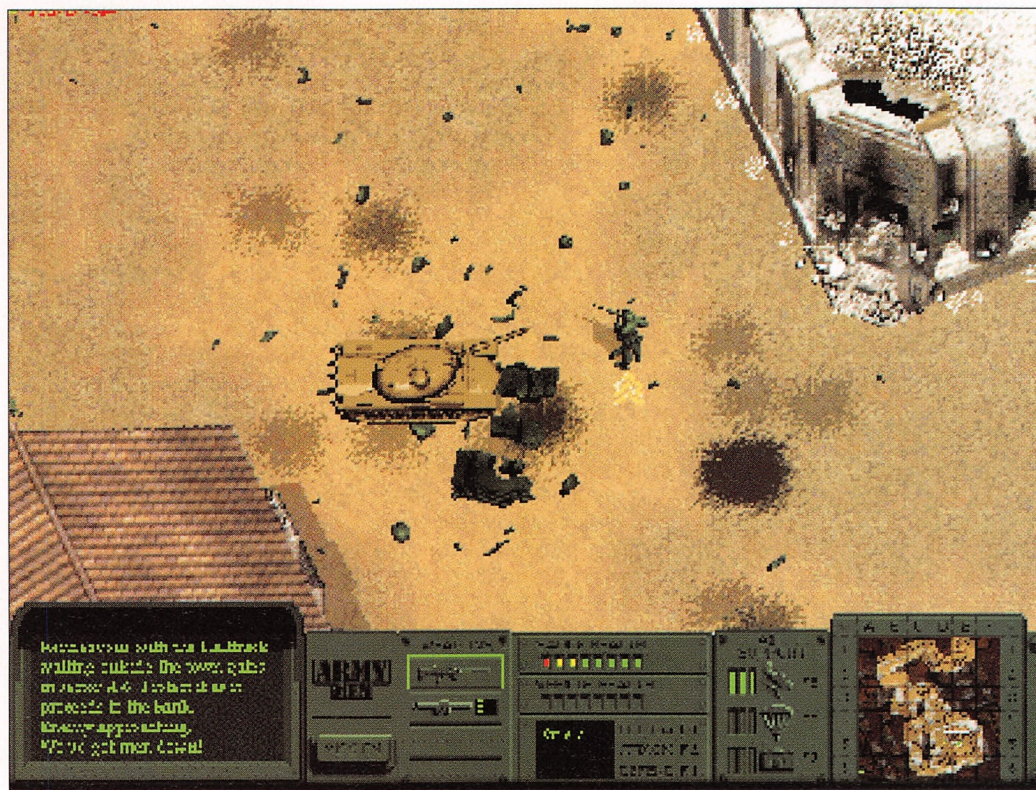
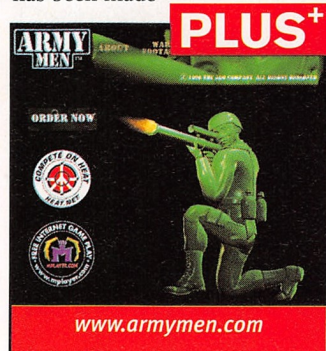
Toy story

Army Men reinvents the best pieces from those classic toy soldier sets which have been sold virtually unchanged since the end of the last world war; the bazooka dude, mortar guy, jeep and those tanks that used to lose their clip-on plastic turrets all the time. 3DO came up with the idea of animating them and putting them in a real-time battlefield environment - toy soldiers for the '90's!

There are two forces struggling for dominance in this war-torn world, the greens and the tans. Each has identical units, thereby nullifying any unique tactical advantages, unlike a lot of other real time strategy games. Essentially, winning in Army Men is a matter of using your troops and the map terrain to best advantage. The closest games to compare it to would be Commandos or X-Com Apocalypse in the sense that it's a squad level strategy game, but it has quite a few differences from those titles also.

Straight and simple

In keeping with the simplistic feel of the game, the interface has been made



as straightforward and easy to learn as possible. The keyboard is your main way of controlling Army Men and in that sense it reminds me a bit of Crusader: No Remorse. Each different unit represented in the game has its own special contribution to make, rather than giving every unit a complex set of capabilities. The bazooka dude can be used to make instant doorways in walls



and barricades, mortars can take out a large area at once, tanks can run over things and there are airstrikes and paratroopers available too. Arcade game style pick-ups add to your inventory by providing extras like flame throwers and extra air strikes.

Because Army Men operates in real time it can become a little hectic, especially when you have to consider the position and cover of all your men while advancing on the enemy. Your squad can very quickly disintegrate under enemy fire from a poorly executed advance, which in turn can be very frustrating. Army Men is one of those games where you have to play each map a few times to learn where the best cover and pick-ups are before you can go all the way and complete the mission.

If squad level strategy is your thing and you thought that Commandos was too bloody frustrating then you could do a lot worse than putting Army Men on your shopping list!

George Soropos

It's a lot like Soldiers at War, but thankfully it's also much better

85%

Category Real Time Strategy
Players 1-4
Publisher 3DO
Price TBA
Rating G8+
Available Now

For Original idea and addictive game-play, not to mention the nostalgia value!

Against Things happen too quickly sometimes and before you know it half your squad is toast.

Need Win 95, P90, 16Mb RAM, 120Mb HD space

Want P166, 32Mb RAM

Cyberball

CATEGORY Pinball
PLAYERS 1
PUBLISHER Arena Games
PRICE \$TBA
RATING G
AVAILABLE Now
NEED P75, 16Mb RAM
WANT P133, 32Mb RAM

overall

6%

Cyberball truly is the "New Style Arcade Pinball".

There are two types of pinball game, you might think: those that determinedly concentrate upon precisely recreating the joys of real pinball for your pleasure at home, and those that abandon realism in pursuit of magic and thrills possible only with a computer version. Neither style is inherently better, although history has shown that the latter tends to be tougher to get right.

But the rules of the pinball game are about to be rewritten! Yes, there are still only two types of pinball game, but the nature of those types have changed irrevocably. "The New Style Arcade Pinball" is what it's called and what a unique, revelatory experience it is! Today, then, there are two types of pinball game: Cyberball and every other one.

Available for your discernment are four tables of increasing preposterousness. The first, Dooke, begins proceedings with a couple of naff loops, a dozen or so targets to hit, and very little else. Once you've recovered from the wave of ecstatic joy that will undoubtedly roll over you while

playing, then you can move onto Enlightenment. Pinball epiphany is reached here thanks to the ingenious idea of splitting the table in half - meaning that, instead of one table with no notable features, you have two with even fewer! Next is Air Crash, a lopsided exercise in nothing much really except a couple of naff loops and a dozen or so targets to hit. And I think we've been there before. Finally, we have Shark Attack, which is, almost inconceivably, worse than all the others!

However, the absolute pinnacle of Cyberball, and by far its most impressive achievement, is the criminal awfulness of the ball physics. Examples include: gaining speed while moving UP the table, doing exactly the same thing at every launch no matter what you do, balancing on sheer



Not really pinball, more like one of those frustrating hand-held-ball-bearing-in-a-wooden-maze games, but with less accurate physics

points, and generally just behaving as if it couldn't give a toss about minor things like gravity, angles and friction.

David Wildgoose

Wreckin Crew

CATEGORY Racing
PLAYERS 1-Multi
PUBLISHER Telstar
PRICE \$TBA
RATING G8+
AVAILABLE Now
NEED P90, 16Mb RAM, 4xCD
WANT An N64 plus a copy of Mario Kart

overall

27%

Reminiscent of a three year old shareware game. And a particularly awful one at that.

Wooohoo! Mario Kart on the PC! What a completely brilliant idea! All you need is a collection of wacky characters with names like Kenny Ravitz, a bunch of crazy cars for them to drive, loads of zany weapons so they can shoot, explode and electrocute each other, power-ups like shields, turbo boosts and mines, and of course plenty of wacky and crazy and zany and JUST PLAIN MAD BONKERS tracks for them all to race around upon! Yes, it really is that easy!

Except that's all rubbish, of course. Wreckin Crew is irrefutable proof that games simply cannot be cobbled together by marketing departments. Games will always be more than just a list of new, exciting and incredible features. You see, despite possessing many of the gameplay elements of Mario Kart, Wreckin Crew fails dismally because it feels terrible. It's as simple as that; the driving model is utterly feeble. I don't expect painstaking accuracy in an arcade racer, but I do expect a

modicum of realism - that is what makes them accessible and fun to play.

Wreckin Crew lets you turn on the spot, reverses the steering when you're driving backwards, bizarrely switches to a 1st-person view when you enter a tunnel, and hilariously encourages you to simply hold down accelerate and tap left and right every now and again when you get stuck behind some solid scenery. I mention the last point because usually you will either drive straight through trackside objects or bump right off them.

And so we shall wait some more for a worthwhile console racer to appear on the PC.

David Wildgoose



OK, we're not proud, we'll admit it: "Mario Kart on the N64 is a great game and we enjoyed playing it immensely". There. Wreckin Crew, tries to duplicate the fun, and falls short of the mark by a couple of miles

Soldier Boyz

This is the worst piece of crap ever to grace my hard drive. Soldier Boyz takes the "aim the gun sight" gameplay of Virtual Cop, but replaces the textured polygons of Sega's title with some of the dodgiest looking FMV yet seen on the PC. The storyline is ripped straight from those woeful Rambo clones that appeared on mass in the late 80's and now reside in some dark corner of your video store. In the jungles of Vietnam lives a big and nasty warlord called Vinh Moc. Normally content with drug running and pulling the ears off rabbits, he's decided to enter the game of kidnapping UN food relief delegates. Enter a bunch of dubious homeboy cliché characters recruited straight out of kiddie prison, led by hot shot marine, Major Howard Toliver.

The laughs begin with the acting. Unbelievable. Z-Grade at its best. I'll credit Soldier Boyz with something, these two bit actors had me in fits at times. Particularly the death scenes of

people badly tripping over and yelling out "Argh". It is sad to see the inclusion of a quality actor such as Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa (otherwise known as Shang Tsung from the Mortal Kombat flick). His role is relegated to mostly appearing in death scenes repeating such memorable lines as "My name is Vinh and I must be victorious!". Tops!

Gameplay is simple. Just advance through sector after sector of bad FMV waving your mouse around the screen hopefully clicking on bad guys before they get a shot off. Numerous moments of hilarity are common place, but there are favourites, like in a firefight where you shoot a guy in an outdoor dunny. As he slumps over the toilet bowl still reading his issue of



A commendable effort, but we found a winner for the title of "Worst Game Ever" a couple of issues ago

Third World Terrorist Weekly, his mate appears from the same tiny one toilet shack. It must get real lonely in the jungle..

Pete Sharpe

CATEGORY FMV blast-a-thon

PLAYERS 1

PUBLISHER Dreamcatcher Interactive

PRICE TBA

RATING MA 15+

AVAILABLE TBA

NEED 486/66, 8MB RAM, DOS 5.0

WANT 4x CD-ROM

overall

12%

A terrible FMV mouse clicky game, but points received for watching bad actors ham it up.

Ultra Violent Worlds

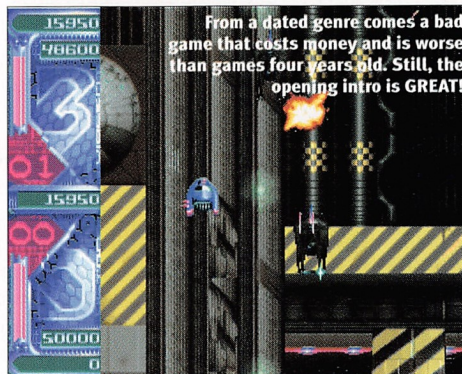
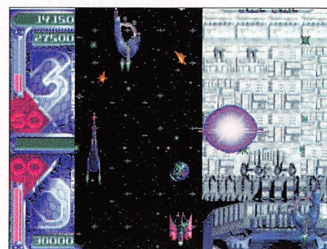
Many gamers will have fond memories of feeding countless 20c coins into arcade machines like Raiden and 1942. These top-down shoot-fests combined stunning (at the time) visuals with frantic and addictive gameplay. Unfortunately, with the introduction of arcade hits like Street Fighter 2, the popularity of these games waned. PC games like Raptor represented the last vestiges of hope for the genre.

Australian developers, Vorlon Software, are attempting to renew interest in top-down shooters with their debut title; Ultra Violent Worlds. They're also the latest development house to jump on the cloning bandwagon. ARRGH! When will the practice of cloning ever end? The formation of vigilante anti-cloning squads, tasked with beating offending developers into submission, is becoming an increasingly attractive solution to the problem.

Vorlon have unwisely opted to utilise Hackneyed Game Plot Number 1 (Aliens are trying to take over the world and, out of

billions of people, you're the only one who can stop them). The fact that developers fail to shy away from such trite story lines is incredible.

Ultra Violent Worlds fails miserably in the gameplay department. In accordance with the strict guidelines set out in the Idiot's Guide to Game Cloning, the player pilots a ship furnished with the latest weaponry and uses it to battle endless hordes of enemy spacecraft. Gameplay consists solely of holding down the fire key while manoeuvring the ship using the cursor keys. Such complexity is unprecedented! Cue sarcastic gasp.



From a dated genre comes a bad game that costs money and is worse than games four years old. Still, the opening intro is GREAT!

The complete lack of originality that applies to Ultra Violent Worlds' gameplay also extends to its visuals. Admittedly, the intro movie looks exceptional, but the in-game graphics are a farce.

In comparison to other top-down shooters, many of which were released over four years ago, Ultra Violent Worlds is vastly inferior in every possible way. As for its \$40 price tag? Somehow I don't think so. In all honesty, because its graphics and gameplay are neither revolutionary nor compelling, Ultra Violent Worlds really only qualifies as a freeware title.

Brett Robinson

CATEGORY Top-Down Shooter

PLAYERS 1-2

PUBLISHER Vorlon Software

PRICE \$40

RATING G

AVAILABLE Now

NEED P90, 8Mb RAM or an AGM Amiga with 4Mb RAM

WANT P90, 16Mb RAM

overall

30%

A great looking intro... leading into terrible graphics, gameplay; everything.

LEISURE SUIT LARRY'S CASINO

Everyone's favourite misogynist makes a triumphant (if unlikely) return in this new casino sim from Sierra

Developer: Sierra
Players: 1-Lots
Rating: MA 15+
Need: P90, 16MB RAM, 2xCD
Want: P133, 32MB RAM, Internet connection

Ah, Leisure Suit Larry Laffer! How many times did you make me snigger in perverse glee while hunched over a computer hoping my parents wouldn't see what I was playing. Far too many at a rough guess, but now I am a man and have put away such childish things. Or I thought I had until this game came along. A little like flares, or probably more correctly, a little like a No Fat Chicks T-shirt, Larry is staging a comeback through the dubious medium of Larry's Casino.

Five card STUD! (geddit?)

Played either online or off, Larry's Casino is a fairly complete sim as far as gambling titles go. You begin the game in your rather under-decorated hotel room and, armed with your Larrybucks, set off into the Casino proper. In terms of actual games, the title has Poker of many styles (most of which are a total mystery to the novice), craps, roulette, blackjack - even slot machines. What stands out most about the casino though, is the in-game environ-

ment. Rather than sitting around a table, Larry has everyone inside a spa, with your cards and chips on floaty lilo-things in front of you. Of course, everyone is naked, but you don't get to see anything (if you get my drift). However, try clicking on one of your opponents and see what happens...

Do it with other people! (fnar, fnar!)

Although Larry's Casino is a complete game in itself, it is really designed for multiplayer, with



In the inimitable Larry Laffer style, gambling can be fun! Who would have thought!

game and join. If you run out of Larrybucks while online, you'll need to head over to one of the Party Games sections to try and

earn some more. In true Larry style the games include Pick Up Master, which lets you win cash for the best pick up line and Larry's Comedy Club where you're rewarded for pithy one-liners. Hmmm.

Some Cute Touches (nudge, nudge!)

One of the things I really enjoyed about Larry's Casino online was the ability to change your skins' facial expression through the use of emoticons. Either clicking on an icon from the menu or actually typing it in would immediately alter your face, from grins, to tongues poking out, to extraordinarily grumpy. Pointless in the long run, but fun during a game of poker - especially when bluffing. I was also totally chuffed with the CyberLarry 2000 in your hotel room, the sole purpose of which is to tell crap jokes at you.

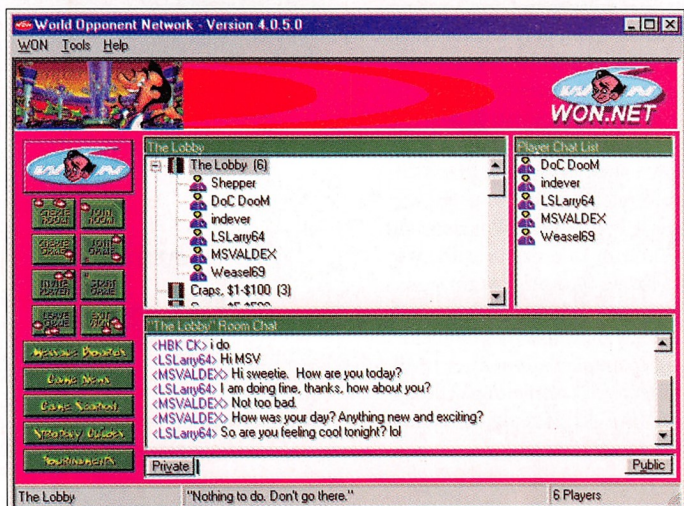


Why Bother (err...)

Of course there are elements to Larry's Casino that just seem to be a waste of data space. This was stuff like the Gift Shop, where you can buy items to give to other players, the Wedding Chapel for online marriages (ugh!), even the bars and restaurants that you can visit - they're really nothing more than glorified chat rooms. If you want to chat with people, get an IRC program or go to a party. The Larry Casino options are clunky and unwieldy at best.

Of course what you really want from a casino sim is something that will teach you the rules for when you head out to the real thing, and Leisure Suit Larry's Casino is certainly capable of that. Although you might find yourself a bit disappointed when you hit the Crown only to discover that everyone is fully clothed and not up to their necks in hot soapy water...

The Reverend Dr Nic Healey



EMERGENCY ROOM INTERN

Frankly, I'm appalled by your treatments, Dr Nick Riviera!

Developer: Legacy/Alpha
Players: 1
Need: 486 or better, 4 Megs RAM, 5 Megs disk space, SVGA card, SVGA monitor, DOS(or Wings), 2x CD-ROM drive, sound blaster compatible sound card, mouse.
Want: Ph.d, white lab coat, headband with reflective circular thing stuck to it.

Emergency Room Intern puts you in Nick Riviera's shoes, the day after he graduated (narrowly) from Med School. Unfortunately, the only thing you can remember about your entire college experience is a hazy sixties party, where you were affirming drunkenly:

"Seriously Baby, I can prescribe anything I want!"

The next thing you know, everyone's calling you "Doctor", someone stuffs a clipboard and stethoscope into your hands, then ushers you into a waiting room filled with real patients, urgently awaiting treatment! Your ass is seriously on the line. The supervising Doctor is poring over your every move with a fine tooth comb and any mistakes you make will stick out like a stinking radioactive fish in a CATscan machine. You're sweating profusely as you nervously stammer: "Nnn-nnn-Next?"

A beefy man, his face looking clammy and grey, staggers deliriously to the desk holding a blood-soaked rag to his head.

"I hurtt my...my.. testante.... on de the....Cosa Mia!... oooooh..... El...Pescado Sondriente!"

He mumbles, swaying back and forth before vomiting explosively over the open case notes of a tragically Alzheimic Stuntman.

What do you do? (Besides pre-calling a very good malpractice lawyer) Stuffed if I know! This game is the kind of thing Med Grads might play to brush up. It is harshly difficult, although the question of whether one would actually gain

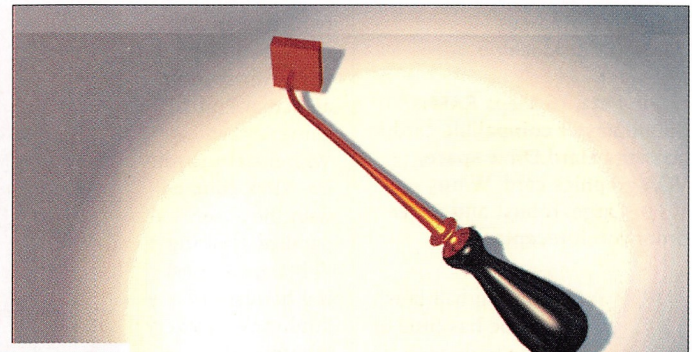
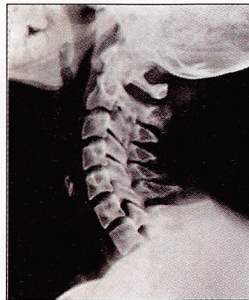
real insight into medicine by playing it is questionable.

Pick-a-prognosis

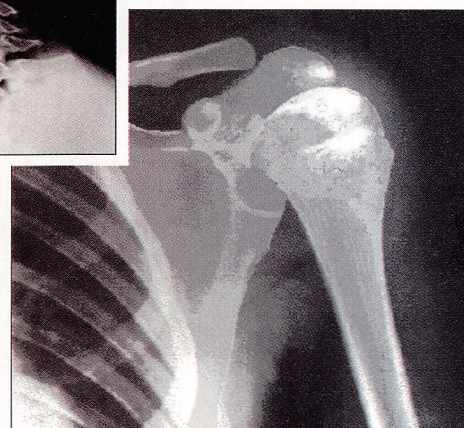
It's filled with a wealth of anatomical information in Encarta style databases, and generic treatment methods for various conditions. You can basically consult this information as you receive new cases, and thankfully there is no time limit, or your patients would be cold, bagged and tagged, before you could arrive at a treatment decision!

Submitting your diagnosis is done in a multiple-choice form, where you have a one in eight chance of picking the right prognosis out of a list of misleading alternatives.

You will have to learn quite a bit of medical jargon in order to rapidly understand the complex descriptions of the illnesses. I was almost straightaway a whiz at treating the bone injuries, having suffered a score of them myself and quizzed the doctors every time on their procedures and decisions and asked dumb questions about the X-rays, etc. As well as holding a current First Aid certificate which covers most of the simple causalities that people undergo. This kind of rough knowledge holds up in clean-cut, basic situations, but more complicated injuries involving multiple breakages and internal organ damage really start to draw on the wealth of amassed information gathered



Cautery
 this instrument is derived from the Greek word "kauter" for "burn." Two sons in the 10th century used the red-hot cautery to cure all manner of epilepsy, headache, toothache, pleurisy, melancholia, to name a few. Queen Isabella, William Clowes, noted that the iron was useful but that it "bringeth the sat sorrowe and dread of the burning and the smart." Today there are not destroy tissue and disinfect wounds by use of electricity, freezing, heat, or chemicals.



Ze leg bone's connected to ze hip bone. Ze hip bone's connected to ze... err... oh well, just take two aspirin and have a lie down

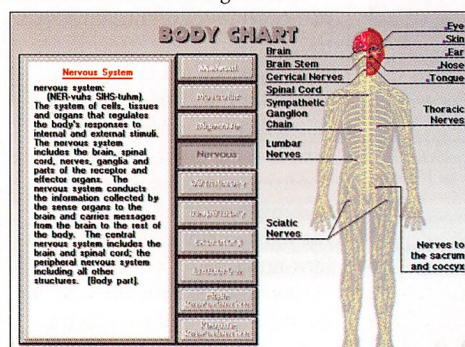
all times over trying to get it right, only to find I'd performed unnecessary tests, or given the wrong discharge information! The info you need is all there, and only when I eventually caved and wrote all

throughout the history of medicine, which is pretty hard to recall off-hand, to say the least. It becomes very clear why Med School lasts six years, and Doctors are paid well for their work. For despite the advanced equipment at your disposal, and the exhaustive treatment information, every case still has its own unique complexities and exceptions that will alter the decisions you must make.

the relevant details down, filling an whole A4 page, was I able to treat them correctly.

There are fifty unique cases on the CD, each patient having unique voices and graphics. Seriously, you will learn a lot about anatomy in a challenging and interesting way. It's worth checking out if you've ever been interested in the body and its treatment.

Hendry Saunders



Miss nurse!

Every step of the way you have FMV sequences where medical colleagues and specialists will comment on your performance. Expect them to be harsh, as only perfection will please them! I played the same case sever-

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BALLS FROM HELL

Closely following in the footsteps of the infamous "Satan's Testicles", Balls From Hell proves to be no less punishing to play.

Developer: Andreas Vahsen/ManMachine

Players: 1

Need: P133, 16 Megs RAM, Soundblaster compatible card, 30 megs Hard Drive space, VGA graphics card, Win95

Want: Large, robust and waterproof vomit receptacle

Attention Pinball fans: this game has little or nothing to do with actual pinball theory, virtual or otherwise. Further, it holds more resemblance to horizontal bungee-jumping in an empty warehouse by yourself. Yet, you're kinda unfit, and walking in any direction takes a stupendous effort and requires long breaks between footsteps, so you don't drown in your own sweat.

Be the ball

This game is a bad gimmick, badly put together. You ARE the Pinball, and you can influence your roll direction and horizontal orientation via use of the arrow keys. You might be thinking it's a powerful adrenaline rush, with you narrowly avoiding obstacles and bouncing off them at a jarring, nauseating speed. Nope. You lethargically drag up and down the board



(which strangely resembles nothing I have ever seen in an actual Pinball game) in bad Wolfenstein graphics. That, coupled with the absence of paddles, flashing lights, or interesting bonuses of any kind make it a very strange game. Seemingly drawing nothing from any part of pinball history, while simultaneously missing the one opportunity for excitement; speed. It's a pointless and depressing mash around a flat jumble of crappy models chucked together in a bland and unaesthetic way.

Take it away!

These kind of games make me nostalgic for the "Golden Age" of videogaming, back when the Commodore 64s, Amigas and fledgling 8-bit consoles ruled the world. Games in that era

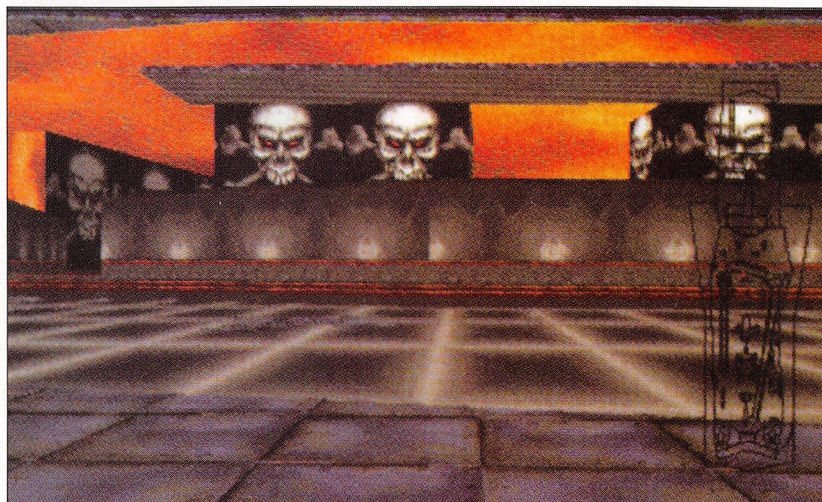
were severely restrained in terms of hardware and software, yet they were unbelievably fun to play. Games from those days still hold their intangible appeal,

which many people believe was anchored in carefully crafted gameplay.

In contrast, tripe-filled titles like this, churned out by money-minded Hollywood meatheads seem misguided, shallow and crippled despite the near-unlimited capabilities of the computers they run on.

This game might have worked if it was five hundred times faster, incorporated "real" pinball table designs, paddles, bonuses, and scoring system and involved at least one flashing light. Instead, it reads like a how-not-to.

It's another Coffee-coaster for the collection, a nifty spacer to



Just to make us dislike this game even more, it refused to be screen-grabbed. No problem, we thought, 99.9% of games have a site online with screenshots. This game, of course, was the 0.1% that doesn't. So we had to scan the tiny shots on the back of the box. Then we burnt the box.

stick under a table leg to level your PC desk or perhaps prop up a bookshelf. As for us, we loaded it into the frilly elastic knickers we keep strung between the handles of the office flight yoke. "Pull!" I yelled. Our only review copy of Balls From Hell came to a sudden violent demise. Then we burned the box.

The only game that seems to have had simpletons responsible for every phase of development. Nothing about this game is interesting or fluent in any way. An appalling embarrassment for a 1998 release.

Hendry Saunders

LATEST GAME SPECIALS



Mech Commander

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Final Fantasy VII

\$79



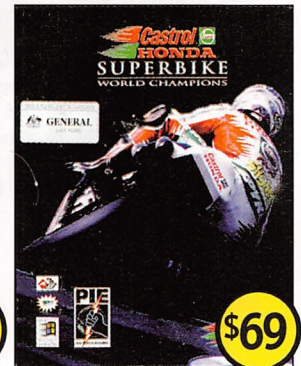
Need For Speed III

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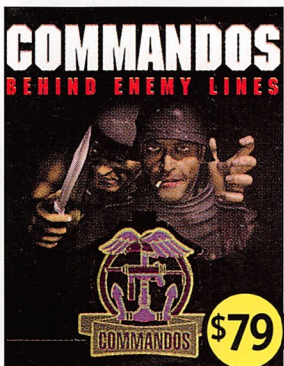
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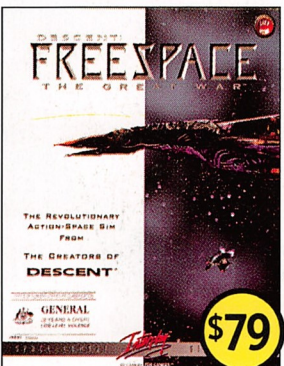
Castrol Superbike

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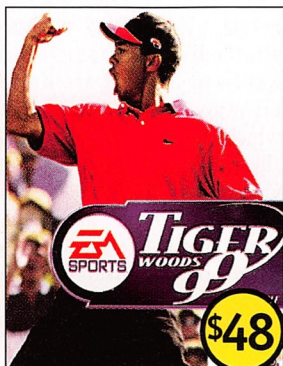
Commandos

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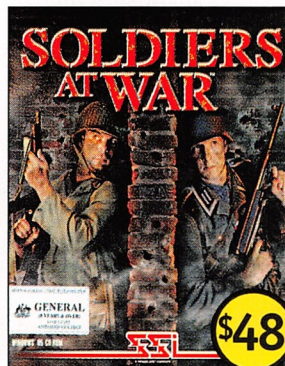
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MIG MAN'S COMBAT DIARY VOL VI

MECH COMMANDER

STRATEGY GUIDE

Mech it easier for yourself. By Peter Inglis

Talk about tough assignments! Editor Ben had been smiling as he handed me the MechCommander package. I worry when he smiles. My fears were justified. The job description seemed straight-forward enough. Sit in air-conditioned comfort in orbit aboard an Inner Sphere Command ship and command squads of Mechs in battle. Why not? I'd spent many days and nights commanding the troops in Command & Conquer, Red Alert and Dark Reign. What could be so hard? I was soon to find out.

Pesky aliens

Remember that scene in Starship Troopers where the first invasion of the Klendathu planet is under way and our intrepid troopers run over a hill smack bang into a horde of Warrior bugs? Remember that gut-writhing, butt-clenching, clammy palms experience? I sure did.

Being new to the Mechwarrior/ BattleTech universe (my excuse and I'm sticking to it), the Mechs under my command were constantly and repetitively battered to pieces by the enemy clan mechs. Arms and legs blown off, armour shredded, weapons shattered, my team was

lucky to limp home with their chassis intact... and this was on the first two missions!

Blow stuff up

This game is "Easter Egg Heaven". I found myself wondering aloud at the details. Blow up a vehicle and the crew run away, cranes loading trucks which bounce as the gravel falls in, trees getting knocked for six, distinctive footprints for different Mechs, fences getting trampled and so on it goes. There's a lot of stuff you can interact with (blow up), this is a war zone after all. But real people live here too (real small people). You might come charging over a hill and find yourself tramping through a shopping mall, or stepping in a swimming pool next to a manor house!

FASA have created intricate and richly detailed landscapes. I found myself playing missions over again just to wander around and check it all out.

The Six Steps to Victory

1. Command and Control
2. Recon
3. Manoeuvre
4. Troops in contact
5. Fire Support
6. Combat Engineering



STEP 1. COMMAND AND CONTROL

"THERE'S NO ONE WAY OR RIGHT WAY TO WIN EACH OF THE MISSIONS. MECH COMMANDER IS A GAME ABOUT REAL STRATEGY AND TACTICS, AND THE TRUE EXPERIENCE OF COMMAND."

Jordan Weisman, co-creator of the original BattleTech board game, and Mech Commander.

There you have it, straight from the horse's mouth, you won't win MechCommander without careful consideration of tactics. MC rewards thoughtful gameplay and punishes severely the impetuous commander. You should count on spending about half an hour planning each mission before launching into battle.

Read the mission briefing. Read it carefully. You usually have two or three Primary Objectives in each mission. The objectives are available in summary form in the MFD (Multi Function Display) once the troops have landed. Most of your missions are not of the "destroy everything" variety, in fact avoiding contact with the enemy is a necessity. You usually command a "lance" which is a squad of 4 Mechs, so you will be outnumbered and outgunned in most missions.

Bear in mind that a briefing is a series of educated guesses as to what you will encounter on the ground. The fog of war hides many terrors, so be prepared to be surprised.

Weapon Requirements

Weapons come in 2 basic flavours: Beam weapons and Projectile weapons.

HAWK

GUNNERY	PILOTING	JUMPING	SENSORS	RANK: Green
---------	----------	---------	---------	-------------

Hawk prides himself on his ability to swoop in for the kill and in the fact that he can make any minor skirmish sound like an epic battle.

Hawk, lacks battle experience but is good on sensors, needs experience at gunnery and piloting

HUNTER

GUNNERY	PILOTING	JUMPING	SENSORS	RANK: Regular
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With a well chosen call-sign, Hunter knows how to move and shoot like few others.

Hunter, a regular pilot with good gunnery skills, perhaps a good choice for long-range attacks?

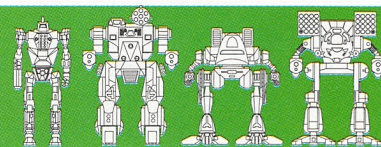
COMMANDO-A
25 Ton Light Mech

CALL SIGN: BEAST	RANK: Green		
GUNNERY	PILOTING	JUMPING	SENSORS

11M

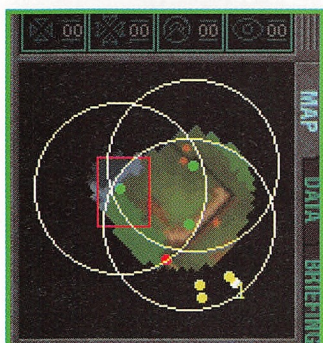
WEAPON	ARMOR	INTERNAL	ENGINES	PAYLOAD
SRM Pack	SRM Pack	SRM Pack	SRM Pack	Laser
Medium	Long			

A Commando fitted out for close range combat, he should probably lose a Short Range Missile pack or two and pack another Laser



"A WEAPON IS MERELY A DEVICE FOR DELIVERING ENERGY TO A TARGET." MiG Man from a speech to the Inner Sphere Academy.

"MILITARY INTELLIGENCE....A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS?" popular aphorism



Wide sensor coverage. Just make sure your Mechs can give each other supporting fire in case of enemy contact



High ground in Mech Commander usually has no vegetation. The landscape is well enough rendered so you get a real sensation of contour and elevation

Beam Weapons

Traditionally (in the twentieth century) the problem with beam weapons has been that they need enormous energy sources. These energy sources tend to be bulky and heavy. The Mech tech's of the future have solved this with their compact fusion reactors. The second main problem with beam weapons is that they need time to deliver the energy. We can usually assume that the prospective target will not oblige! The pulsed lasers used here deliver more energy/time than conventional lasers but still fall far short of the energy delivered by a projectile weapon. Basically they have to heat the target until damage occurs. Therefore lasers are best deployed in groups, as one laser is more likely to tickle than destroy. The main advantage of lasers is that they won't run out of ammo.

Projectile Weapons

The time honoured way of delivering destruction is to deliver a small, dense package at high velocity...hence the gun. Even better if the projectile contains a charge which explodes on contact - hence the cannon.



If you can get your hands on a Uller, it carries a useful amount of ordnance. We have armed it for fighting at all ranges

The main disadvantage of projectile weapons is that they have limited ammo, which will probably run out just when you need it most.

Arm the Mechs

You might equip some mechs for long range attack, but make sure they can defend at close range also. Balance the loadouts of your party by weapon ranges.

Select your Mechwarriors

Duke Nukems need not apply for command positions. Your Mechwarriors supply the guts, you supply the brains. This is not a game of sacrificing mindless minions, as your Mechwarriors have their own personalities and attributes. Get to know them, knowing their voices helps to sort out what



Once you have visual contact with an object, use "get info" to access your database on it.



By doing recon we found a back entrance to this base which wasn't apparent on the briefing map

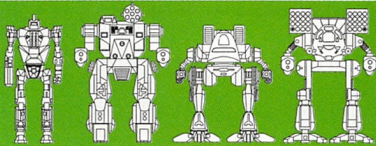
is often very dense message traffic. Your Mech pilots are already elite members of the military, but there is no substitute for experience under fire. Therefore take the rating "Green" as a relative one, all the pilots are competent Mech drivers and professional soldiers.

Pilots will suffer battle fatigue if you send them on more than two consecutive missions. Fatigue is indicated by a smaller number of red dots above the pilot's picture. Six dots indicates a well rested pilot.

Decide on routes

Remember no plan survives contact with the enemy, but if you go into battle with no plan at all, start writing those letters to relatives.

- Mark hills for observation points.
- Mark bridges and paths through forest as chokepoints.
- Plan routes to the mission objectives. Avoid roads as enemy patrols will likely be using these. Use the all-terrain capabilities of your Mech.
- Pick key terrain objectives for each movement stage. e.g "move to the intersection/bridge/hill."
- Always have an alternate route planned to each objective, in case the preferred route gets 'too hot'.
- Mark your alternate routes with a dotted line.



Hasta la Vista baby!

Note available fire support

You have fire support available in the forms of Small Artillery Strike and Large Artillery Strike. These are good for taking out enemy defenses, slowing an enemy attack or destroying bridges.

STEP 2. RECON

Visual recon

Nothing yet beats the "Mark I human eyeball" for getting a positive ID on enemy targets. Use the high ground. Line of sight increases dramatically from elevated positions. Most maps will have vantage points from which you gain valuable overviews of the battlefield. Remember that artillery strikes can't be targeted without a clear line-of-sight to the target.

Use the MFD (Multi Function Display)... a lot

After playing for a couple of days (and coping a hiding), I

realised that I had been neglecting the MFD map. The mouse was busy darting about the tactical map, and never seemed to make it up to the MFD. I used a Saitek PC-Dash (retails for about \$150) and set it up to control the MFD and Mech movement commands. This allows your mouse cursor more time on the tactical display, designating targets and destinations. An Online Database is available in the MFD. Use it to get data on enemy Mechs and vehicles. Use it to plan an attack by checking enemy weapons capabilities and then to modify an attack by reference to armour status.

Use onboard sensors

On-board sensors combine input from infra-red (IR), seismic (listening for enemy footsteps, a high tech variant of the old red indian ear-to-the-ground trick), and magnetic anomaly (MAD) sensors and present the pilot with contact bearings. The pilot will report contacts to you verbally and a line will appear on the MFD showing the bearing to the contact. It is then up to you to access your Database on the contact for info on the contact's weapons loadout. For example if it is armed with Long Range Missiles only, don't

engage in a long-range duel, go for a short range engagement. Degradation of sensor coverage will occur as your Mech moves. The degree of degradation will vary depending on your pilot's experience.

Additional recon assets may be available from brigade. They can be accessed from the fire support menu on the MFD.

"If we know that our own men are in a condition of attack, but are unaware that the enemy is not open to attack, we have gone only halfway towards victory."

Sun Tzu, "The Art of War" ca 500 B.C.



When you select a Mech it will light up on the MFD



Booty captured so far on this mission

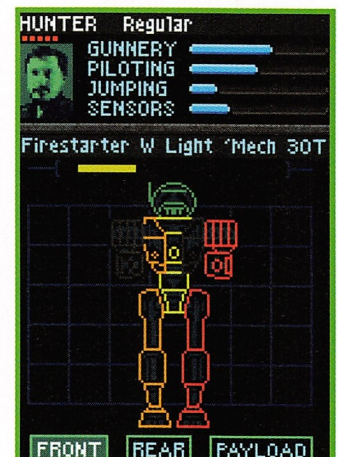
STEP 3. MANOEUVRE

To select a group of Mechs use the function keys F1-F4. To select individual Mechs it is usually quickest to click on the icons at the bottom of the screen. When you select a Mech it will light up on the MFD.

Move to specific Terrain Objectives: Hilltop, river bend, intersection - give your troops a definite destination on each leg of manoeuvre. When you reach the destination, check your sensors and prepare for the next move.

"BE BEFORE THE ENEMY IN OCCUPYING THE RAISED AND SUNNY SPOTS."

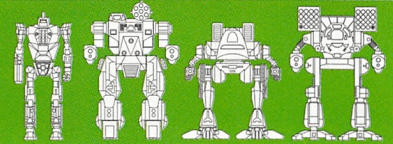
Sun Tzu, The Art of War, 500 B.C.



This Commando is pretty badly shot up, you might consider putting him at the back in the next firefight



Taking a long shot



Use available cover

Forests and "dead ground" behind hills are effective at hiding your movements from enemy view.

Power down

When Mechs are inactive for a period of time, e.g. when awaiting results of recon efforts, power down to minimise chances of detection by enemy sensors.

Bounding Overwatch

Advance using Bounding Overwatch. The basic concept of BOW is that one element (element A) remains stationary and provides fire cover for the manoeuvring element (element B). Then the elements swap roles, element B providing cover for element A as it moves.

Attack

A deliberate attack on an enemy installation requires planning. Try to capture key enemy buildings, such as Turret and gate control buildings. These will give you access to the gates and fixed weapons on base.

STEP 4. TROOPS IN CONTACT

Encounter Battle-checklist Mech vs. Mech

- Select your attacking Lance (group of up to 4 Mechs)



- Designate the target
- Your Mechs will move in and attack
- Select a Mech from the control bar

- Designate for medium or long range attack
- Select a closer Mech and order to move to the rear of the target at max speed (where the armour is thinner)
- Keep the close Mechs on the move

Crippling for salvage

If combat is progressing well, designate for:

- Leg shots to immobilise (1 and 3 on the numeric keypad)
- Head shots to blow up the cockpit (8 on the numeric keypad)

Mech vs. vehicles

- If time permits, get info on the vehicle
- Check its weapons range
- Fight it at a range which doesn't suit the enemy (e.g. if it has long range weapons, get in close and vice versa)
- Concentrate your firepower by

ordering all Mechs to destroy the vehicle ASAP

Individual vehicles don't pose much of a threat, but the vehicles will occupy your time, wear down your Mechs armour and deplete your ammunition, putting you at a disadvantage when engaging Mechs.

STEP 5. FIRE SUPPORT

Fire support is called in from the MFD. Note that you must have visual contact with the target area. A large artillery strike or 2 small artillery strike will demolish a bridge. They cause a fair amount of damage to light Mechs, but are minimally effective against medium and heavy Mechs.

A cluster of vehicles is a prime target for an artillery strike.

Small Artillery Strike

Time to arrival: ~ 7 secs
Damage radius: ~ 50 metres

Large Artillery Strike

Time to arrival: ~ 14 secs
Damage radius: ~ 75 metres

Sensor Probe

Duration: ~ 2 minutes

Camera Drone

Duration: Until destroyed

STEP 6. COMBAT ENGINEERING

Capture supplies and buildings

Be constantly on the lookout for enemy structures with salvage parts inside. Pass the cursor over structures and the Salvage icon will appear if there are parts inside. Of course your Mechs don't actually carry the salvage out in a little red wagon, but mark it for pickup by support crews.



Better move that Commando out of harms' way

Containers usually contain spare weapons. These are worth capturing as the clan weapons are lighter than their Inner Sphere counterparts.

Repairing Mechs

Take a Refit Truck when available. They cost 4500 resource points and are not recovered from the mission, but if you anticipate a long slugfest it's a worthwhile write-off. It also saves you on repair bills after the mission. More importantly they mean you can take potent weapons with limited ammo such as gauss rifles and heavy autocannons. Enemy repair bays are also capturable, although they have a finite repair capacity.

Minefields

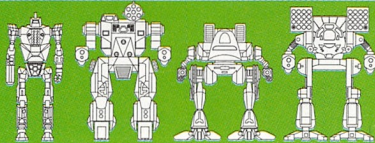
The mine layer costs 9000 resource points, but it can be invaluable, especially in ridding you of pesky enemy vehicles.



Anyone for a dance?



The flashing lights around the vehicles indicate enemy readiness status. When these lights start changing colour, the vehicles are preparing to attack..... you



MISSION TIPS

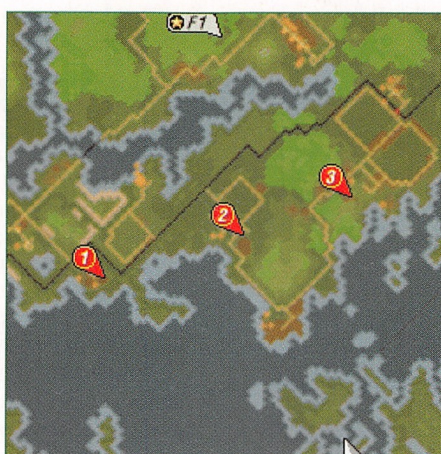
MechCommander has 6 operations ranging from the establishment of a beachhead to finally attacking the enemy HQ. Each operation contains 6 missions. For your delectation PC PowerPlay has printed a set of the Tactical Maps for the first 12 missions. Keep them at hand so you can guide your Mechs to safety when things go to hell (count on it!).



OPERATION 1: "BEACHHEAD"

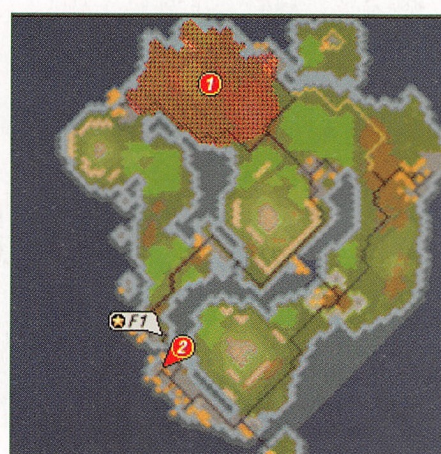
Opn 1 Mission 1 "Liberate work camps"

Equip at least one Mech with long range weapons to engage the guard turrets and the Uller. Put a good shooter in this Mech. Always have an alternate route planned to each objective, in case the preferred route gets 'too hot'.



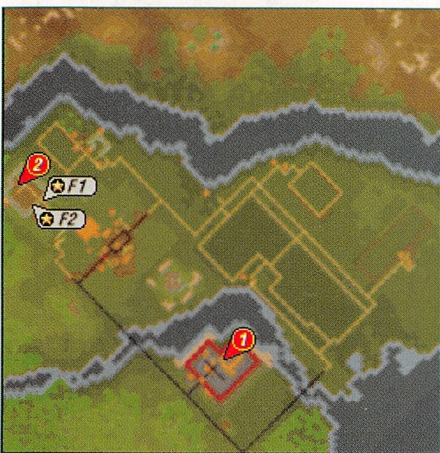
Opn 1 Mission 2 "Rescue"

You'll need to burn an exit through the forest to get out of the clearing. Arty the bridge to slow down the Clan reinforcements. Capture the Enemy Command Vehicle to reveal the location of the 2 Commandos guarding the prison. Use the remaining arty on them. Move quickly or you will have a Hollander II gunning for you (big gun = bad news).



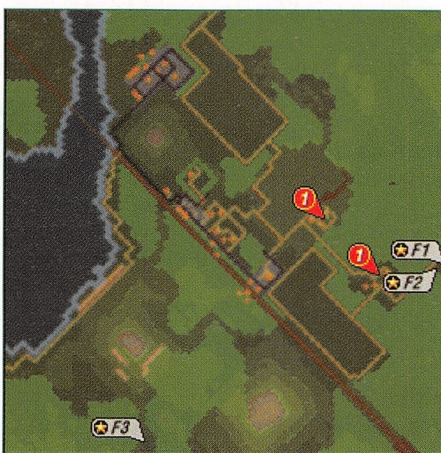
Opn 1 Mission 3 "SAR"

The shortest route looks like the left side of the island... it looks too easy so you'd better have alternate routes planned. Water forms a huge natural obstacle in the island centre. Remember that your Mechs can run, and don't start a fight you can't finish.



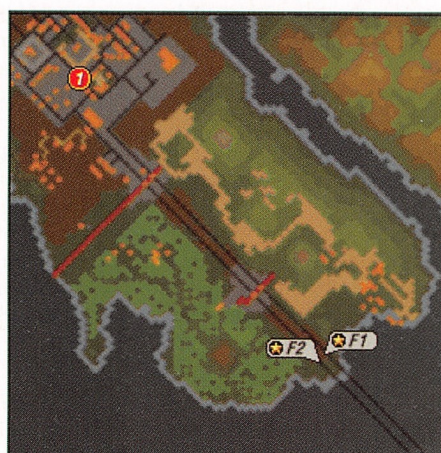
Opn 1 Mission 4 "Attack Base"

This is the first mission requiring a deliberate attack on a well fortified base. Look for volatile targets and try to capture turret and gate control buildings.



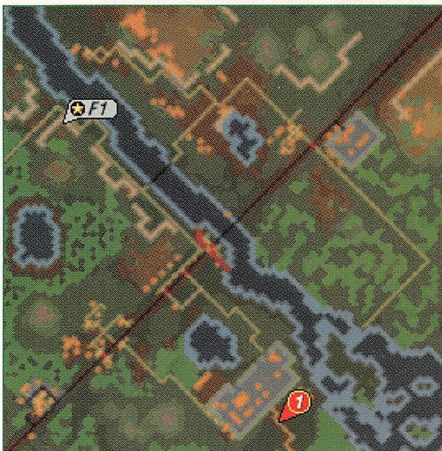
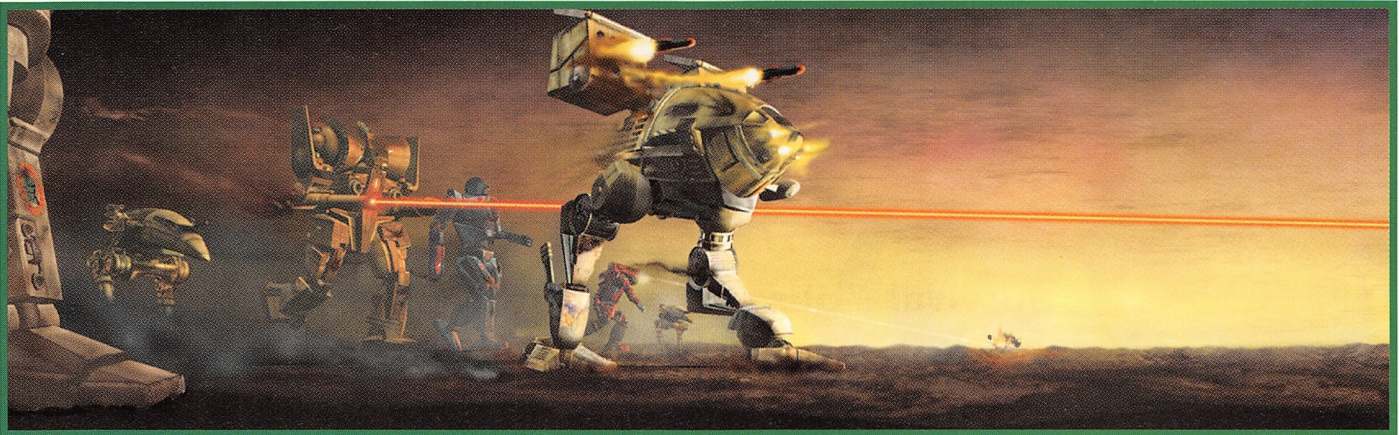
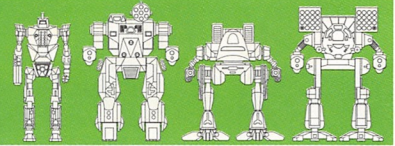
Opn 1 Mission 5 "Defend a position"

Your first attempt at defending a fixed position. A high paced, intense mission. Pick the essential chokepoints to mine and reconnoitre aggressively.



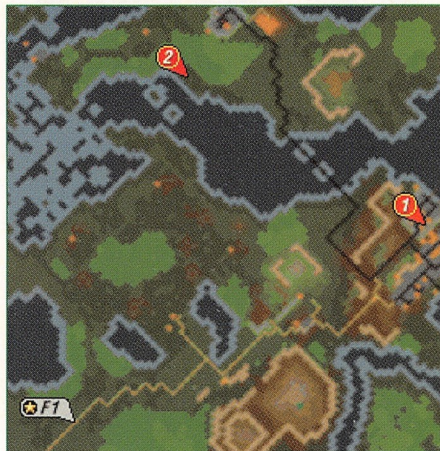
Opn 1 Mission 6 "Search and Destroy"

Search'n'destroy Clan Mechs in an industrial zone. Go through the forest, punch a hole in the wall, capture turret and gate control buildings. Set up a nice trap for the Clan.



OPERATION 2: "SKYHOOK" Opn 2 Mission 1 "Search and Rescue"

A desperate mission to rescue a stranded Inner Sphere Mech. Move very quickly to get the Hunchback over the river. Destroy enemy arty spotter vehicles before they target you with airstrikes. Suggest avoiding built-up areas.



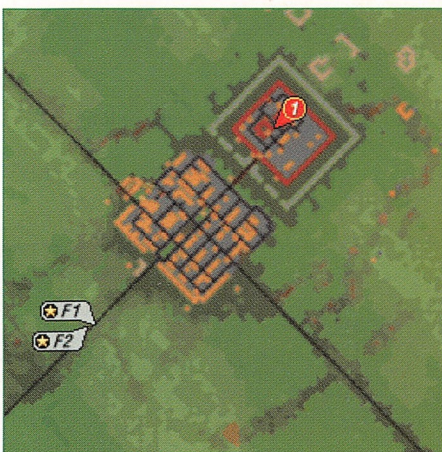
Opn 2 Mission 2 "Destroy Generators"

Destroy 2 powerplants. A refit truck is essential if you expect to pick up all the salvage. Look out for perimeter alarms and target vehicle barracks early.



Opn 2 Mission 3 "Attack Convoy"

Jump-capable Mechs are called for in the briefing but I would suggest it's a case of "from the frying pan into the fire". Unless all your Mechs are jump-capable I would suggest quick-timing it to the lowest river crossing and setting an ambush.



Opn 2 Mission 4 "Destroy Comms Facilities"

You have two basic choices of tactics here, either a slow deliberate assault using heavy Mechs or a rapid incursion with lighter Mechs.



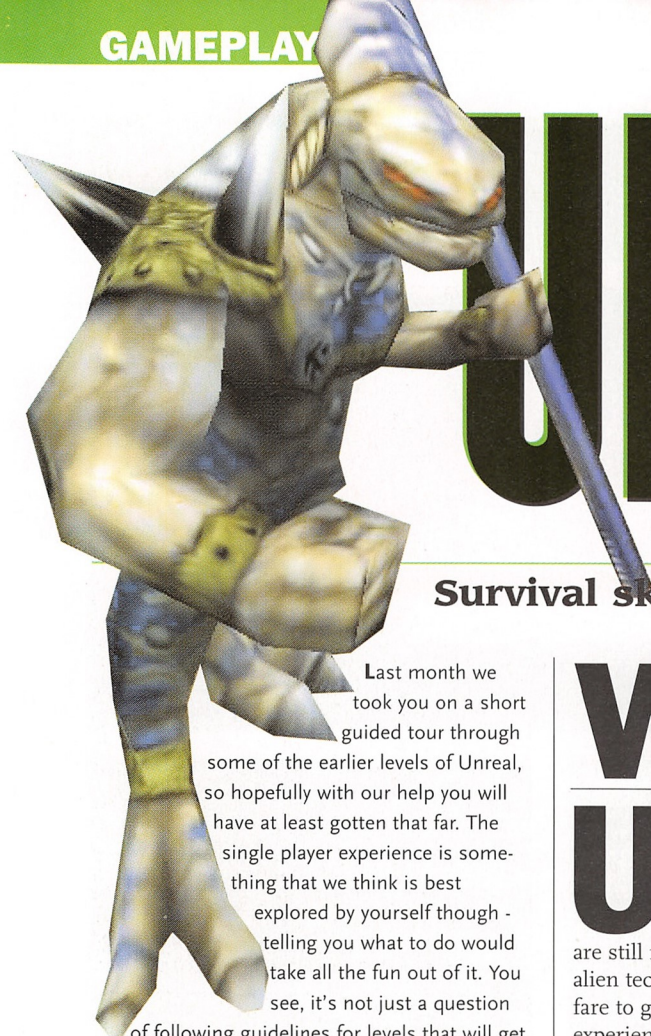
Opn 2 Mission 5 "Destroy the Supply Train"

Head for the tracks and set up an ambush. Simple eh!?



Opn 2 Mission 6 "Capture then Defend a base"

There are two separate phases to this mission, assault and defense. Perhaps a mine layer would be useful and definitely a refit truck. Use a light Mech to spot arty strikes on the bridges to the NE (see why these maps are handy!).



UNREAL

PLAYGUIDE PART 2

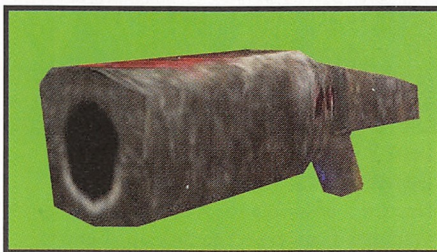
Survival skills for cyber-soldiers. By George Argy

WEAPONS

Last month we took you on a short guided tour through some of the earlier levels of Unreal, so hopefully with our help you will have at least gotten that far. The single player experience is something that we think is best explored by yourself though - telling you what to do would take all the fun out of it. You see, it's not just a question of following guidelines for levels that will get you through Unreal, especially on the harder difficulty levels. You need to know as much as possible about your environment - i.e. the monsters, the weapons, and what to do against those bot things. So here you go then - a complete guide to the foes you'll face in Unreal, what those weird-ass weapons do, and how to get ready for those 14 year old kiddies that do nothing but play Unreal 7 days a week and want to death-match you.



Unreal's weapons are different from your run-of-the-mill pistol, shotgun, machine gun, and rocket launcher variety. Don't get me wrong, these classes of weapons are still in the game, but Epic have mixed in alien technology with your standard human fare to give us a weapon mix that makes the experience so much more interesting.



DISPERSION PISTOL

Standard issue weapon that you start with in a deathmatch game, although you start out with nothing in a single player game. This weapon is quite weak at first, but is made more powerful as you find "power-ups". These add power to the Dispersion Pistol until it's maxed out, and then it's no longer a lamer's toy - it can take out the alien Queen in a one shot with the amplifier when fully charged!

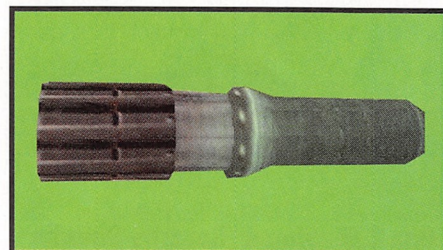
Hotkey: 1
Primary Fire Mode Effect: Energy Blast
Primary Fire Mode Damage: 15
Primary Fire Mode Damage upgrade #1: 40
Primary Fire Mode Damage upgrade #2: 55
Primary Fire Mode Damage upgrade #3: 75
Secondary Fire Mode Effect: Charged energy blast with small radius damage
Secondary Fire Mode Damage: 30
Ammo: None
Max Ammo: 50 - 99 depending on upgrades
Instant Hit/Lead: Lead
Effective Range: Short-Medium
Power-ups: Powerups and energy amplifier
Special Usage: It needs time to recharge, and every shot drains 1-7 cells depending upon the level of power-up you have.



AUTOMAG

The AutoMag is a Marine's best friend. Although it's quite weak, the plentiful supply of ammo, reasonably rapid fire and instant hit delivery make it a decent fall-back weapon. Apart from the Assault Rifle (obviously), it makes a great long-distance weapon in primary-fire mode. Just remember the alt-fire mode is faster but less accurate, so use it only in close-quarters fighting.

Hotkey: 2
Primary Fire Mode Effect: Bullet
Primary Fire Mode Damage: 17 (more for head shot)
Secondary Fire Mode Effect: Bullets, but faster
Secondary Fire Mode Damage: 17
Ammo: Bullets
Max Ammo: 200
Instant Hit/Lead: Instant Hit
Effective Range: Short, medium or long
Power-ups: None
Special Usage: Needs to reload every 20 shots - reloading a clip takes about 2 seconds.



STINGER

The Stinger is a converted mining tool that is usually too weak to do anything in a death-match game, but is good for laying down heaps of fire in a single-player game. It spits

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out rounds at a decent rate in Primary Fire mode, but they are not instant hit projectiles and are quite weak, meaning the Skaarj will be able to dodge this weapon. Use it against slower-moving foes. The secondary-fire mode is too slow and weak to be effective, so stick with Primary Fire for this weapon.

Hotkey: 3

Primary Fire Mode Effect: Rapid-fire shards

Primary Fire Mode Damage: 14 per shard

Secondary Fire Mode Effect: Small cluster of shards (about 5)

Secondary Fire Mode Damage: 70 if all five shards hit

Ammo: Tarydium Shards

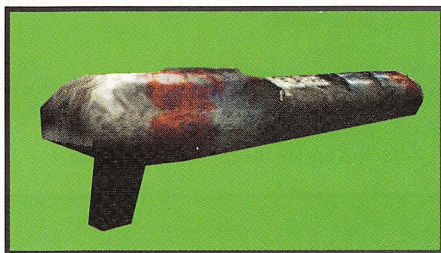
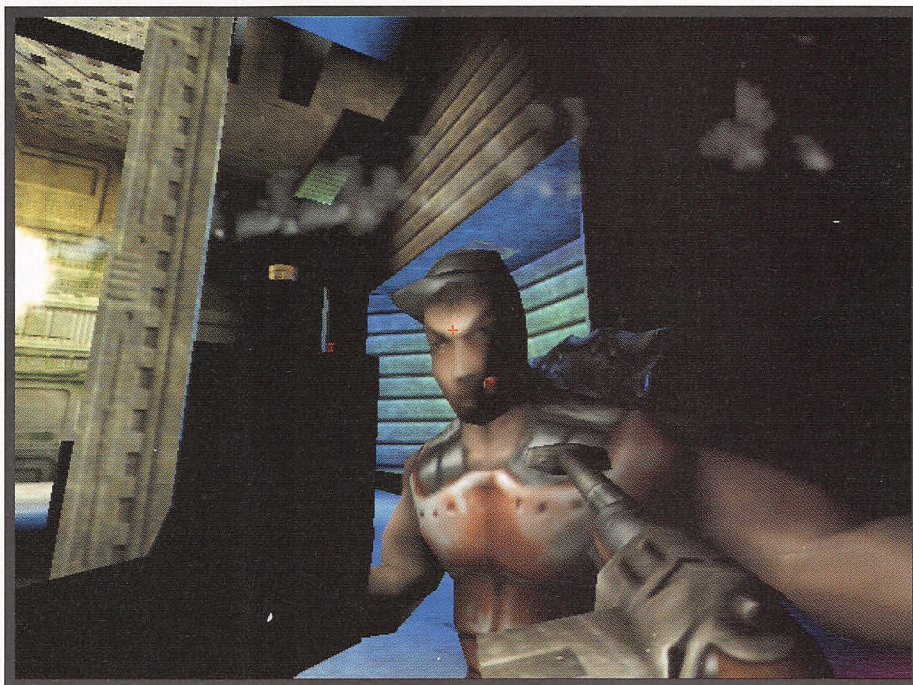
Max ammo: 200

Instant Hit/Lead: Lead

Effective Range: Short-medium

Power-ups: None

Special Usage: None



ASMD

The most underrated weapon in the whole game, except perhaps the RazorJack. The ASMD is deadly in the hands of an experienced user. Its primary fire mode looks like Quake2's Railgun, but delivers less damage. In secondary fire mode it delivers a medium-speed plasma charge that does area damage, but only in a 2D plane, so you need to be accurate. However, combine the two by firing a plasma charge then shoot the flying ball with a primary fire blast (or any other weapon) and you get an explosion that does up to 150 damage. It's difficult, but not impossible.

Hotkey: 4

Primary Fire Mode Effect: Instant Hit Plasma blast

Primary Fire Mode Damage: 30

Secondary Fire Mode Effect: Medium-speed plasma ball

Secondary Fire Mode Damage: 55 (combo hit - 150)

Ammo: ASMD cores

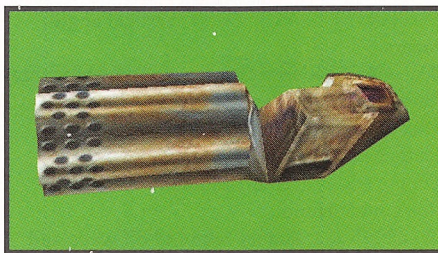
Max Ammo: 50

Instant Hit/Lead: Both

Effective Range: Long for primary mode, short for secondary mode

Power-ups: Energy Amplifier

Special Usage: Use secondary fire, then shoot the ball with primary fire and you get a powerful explosion.



8-BALL LAUNCHER

OK, this is probably the weapon most Quake/Quake2 converts will stick to, but unless used properly it's nowhere near as powerful as even Quake2's Rocket Launcher. If you're the type of player who likes to time his/her shots and fire accurately rather than cover an opponent with gunfire, you can take your time to load more rounds or wait until you have a heat-seeking lock! Watch out for those grenades though, they are much bouncier than Quake2's and they will detonate when they touch any living being - including you!

Hotkey: 5

Primary Fire Mode Effect: Rockets

Primary Fire Mode Damage: 80

Secondary Fire Mode Effect: Grenades

Secondary Fire Mode Damage: 100

Ammo: Eight-balls

Max Ammo: 48

Instant Hit/Lead: Lead

Effective Range: Medium-Long for primary mode, short-medium for secondary mode

Power-ups: None

Special Usage: Heaps! Hold the primary or secondary button down to load 1-6 rounds. Keep the gun trained on an opponent for a few seconds and you get a red targeting cursor, which means you have a heat-seeking lock. Hold down the primary and as you load rounds, press the secondary button as well to fire a tight cluster or rockets - very effective at longer ranges.



FLAK CANNON

The shotgun with the mostest, this baby delivers a rhino-stopping punch at short range. The shrapnel it fires travels rapidly at short range, but the Skaarj have no problem dodging it so reserve this one for slower nasties at close range. In deathmatch it's about the only weapon you can use to sneak up behind an opponent and get an instant kill. The secondary fire is great for clearing out rooms full of bad guys or deathmatch opponents who have paused for a mother's meeting.

Hotkey: 6

Primary Fire Mode Effect: Wide spread of shrapnel

Primary Fire Mode Damage: 100 if all flak hits

Secondary Fire Mode Effect: Fires the whole shrapnel round which explodes when it hits something and delivers a spread of shrapnel

Secondary Fire Mode Damage: 100 if direct hit

Ammo: Flak shells

Max Ammo: 50

Instant Hit/Lead: Lead

Effective Range: Short

Power-ups: None

Special Usage: In primary fire mode the flak bounces off walls, so you can use it to shoot around corners.

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GES BIORIFLE

You may think this weapon sucks when you first use it due to its short range and lack of power, but it does come in very handy in close-quarters fighting. The blobs of Tarydium sludge it fires don't go very far, but you can lob them over obstacles. They can be fired very rapidly and do not need to hit an opponent - they will explode even if they get a whiff of flesh, meaning you just fire the green stuff in your enemy's general direction. Great for firing on the floor as you run backwards from a foe.

Hotkey: 7

Primary Fire Mode Effect: Small globs of sludge with an area effect

Primary Fire Mode Damage: 40 per blob

Secondary Fire Mode Effect: Glob of sludge that you can charge up, also with area effect

Secondary Fire Mode Damage: Up to 100

Ammo: Tarydium Sludge

Max Ammo: 100

Instant Hit/Lead: Lead

Effective Range: Short

Power-ups: None

Special Usage: A full charge of sludge in secondary fire mode is enough to kill most opponents in one shot.



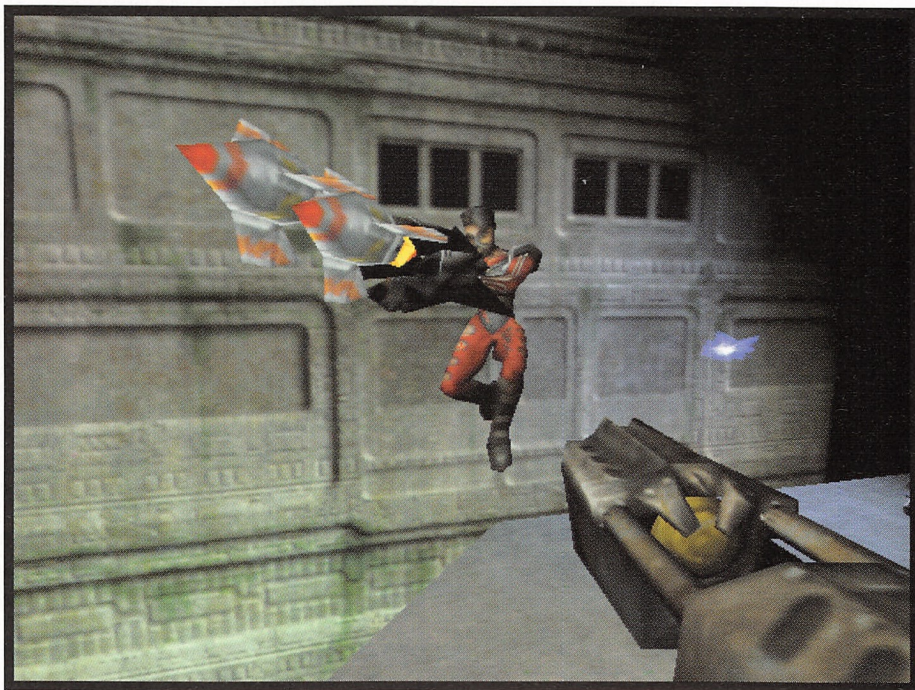
RAZORJACK

Ooh baby does this weapon rock! The RazorJack is a Skaarj weapon that fires spinning blades that can rebound off walls and floors. They make a cool noise when they hit someone too, much like a meat cleaver hitting flesh. The secondary fire mode fires razors at a vertical angle that can be directed slightly whilst in flight, although this is extremely difficult in deathmatch.

Hotkey: 8

Primary Fire Mode Effect: Horizontal angle razors

Primary Fire Mode Damage: 30 (+ for headshot)



Secondary Fire Mode Effect: Vertical angle razors

Secondary Fire Mode Damage: 30 (+ for headshot)

Ammo: Razor blades

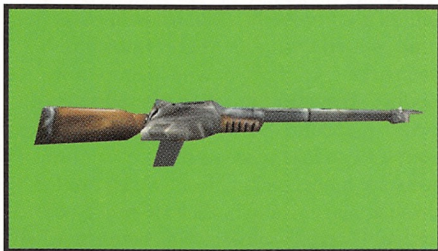
Max Ammo: 75

Instant Hit/Lead: Lead

Effective Range: Short-Medium

Power-ups: None

Special Usage: Razors rebound off walls and floors. Secondary fire mode can be aimed slightly in flight. Can decapitate foes with a headshot.



ASSAULT RIFLE

Snipers will have a field day with this weapon, and there are plenty of University bell-towers in Unreal to get some practice. Its instant delivery of 45 points of damage means long range fun. The secondary fire mode isn't really a fire mode; it just lets you zoom in on your opponent like the FOV command in Quake2. Even better, unlike the Railgun in Quake2, the Sniper Rifle leaves no vapour trail, meaning if you're hidden somewhere high and dark you're going to clock up a great body count.

Hotkey: 9

Primary Fire Mode Effect: Bullet

Primary Fire Mode Damage: 45 (+ for headshot)

Secondary Fire Mode Effect: Zoom in

Secondary Fire Mode Damage: None (it's not really a fire mode)

Ammo: Rifle Bullets

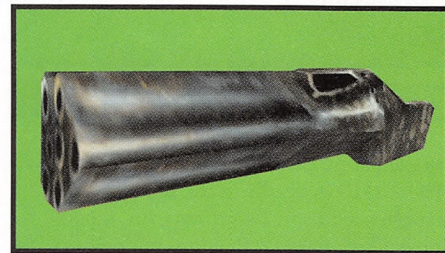
Max Ammo: 50

Instant Hit/Lead: Instant Hit

Effective Range: Medium-Long

Power-ups: None

Special Usage: Headshot can decapitate



MINIGUN

This is Unreal's answer to Quake2's Chaingun. The Minigun is the kind of weapon that will be favoured by newbie players due to its ease of use - point it at your enemy and let loose a barrage of bullets. Although it's easy to use and delivers a ton of bullets, it's not really that powerful which can leave you open to a more powerful weapon like the Flak cannon at close range. The secondary fire rate spins up to double the fire rate like the Chaingun, but is less accurate and virtually useless at long range.

Hotkey: 0

Primary Fire Mode Effect: 5 Bullets

Primary Fire Mode Damage: 17 per bullet

Secondary Fire Mode Effect: 10 Bullets, then spins up to double the fire rate

Secondary Fire Mode Damage: 17 per bullet

Ammo: Bullets

Max Ammo: 200

Instant Hit/Lead: Instant Hit

Effective Range: Medium

Power-ups: None

Special Usage: None

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THE BESTIARY

Unreal's beasts look good, and hurt good. They're smart, coordinated, can work in teams and unlike most other games we've seen to date, if they are hurt they will run away to fight another day. Taking them out is not easy on the 'Easy' level, and on 'Unreal' difficulty you will often find yourself using death-match tactics like you would use against human opponents. To make your life easier, here's a breakdown of every foe you will face in the game, their strengths, weaknesses and the best way to take them out. Good luck!

BITER FISH

These tiny little fishies look so cute swimming around in the water - as cute as piranha, that is. Individually they only do 1 hit point of damage, but the problem is they are pretty much indestructible and travel in large schools.

Hit Points: N/A

Speed: 320 (underwater only)

Sight Radius: 1250

Melee attack/damage: Bite 1

Ranged attack/damage: None

Best way to defeat: Get out of the water as quickly as you can.



DEVIL FISH

Devil Fish are a major pain. Most large bodies of water will contain at least one, if not more. They move pretty quickly underwater, and can also bite you if you stand too close to a shore. Make sure that you surface for air every few seconds if you are fighting them underwater.

Hit Points: 70

Speed: 320 (underwater only)

Sight Radius: 1250



Melee attack/damage: Bite 15, Rip 25

Ranged attack/damage: None

Best way to defeat: Swim backwards and shoot them with your AutoMag.

SQUID

The Giant Squid is the deadliest foe you'll face underwater, apart from the Slith.

Hit Points: 260

Speed: 260 (underwater only)

Sight Radius: 2000

Melee attack/damage: Slap 30, Thrust 35

Ranged attack/damage: None

Best way to defeat: Swim backwards and shoot them with a reasonably powerful weapon like the ASMD.



HORSE FLY

These little blighters are small but ferocious. They can kill an unarmoured human very quickly, and if you hit a swarm without having an automatic weapon you are toast.

Hit Points: 45

Speed: 240

Sight Radius: 1000

Melee attack/damage: Bite 15, Sting 25

Ranged attack/damage: None

Best way to defeat: Either relentlessly fire at them with a stinger, or get a lock on them with an Eightball and watch the gibs fly.



TENTACLE

These creatures are more annoying than a real threat. Tentacles are immobile plants that hang from the ceiling and fire small, painful projectiles. They are found almost everywhere indoors.



Hit Points: 100

Speed: None

Sight Radius: 1000

Melee attack/damage: Whip 30

Ranged attack/damage: Barbs 12

Best way to defeat: Don't waste your serious ammo. Use the Dispersion Pistol or Stinger.

MANTA

Not very common on the planet, nevertheless Manta can kill you very quickly with speedy attacks using their tails. You can usually hear them flying around, and if you hear the sound of their wings once, you'll know when a manta is around.

Hit Points: 100

Speed: 320

Sight Radius: 1500

Melee attack/damage: Sting 20, Whip 20

Ranged attack/damage: None

Best way to defeat: Try to get them in an outdoor area and run backward firing your AutoMag or Stinger.



CAVE MANTA

Although it's not as powerful as the plain Manta, the Cave Manta lurks in caves and mineshafts and other dimly-lit areas, making it difficult to see. Keep a flashlight handy.

Hit Points: 50

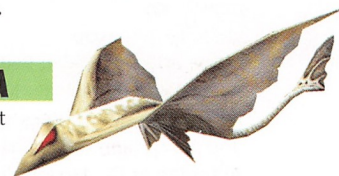
Speed: 320

Sight Radius: 1500

Melee attack/damage: Sting 15, Whip 15

Ranged attack/damage: None

Best way to defeat: Same tactics as normal Manta, but keep flashlight beam trained on them.



"It's time you saw the future while you still have human eyes" - Kane



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GIANT MANTA

What, you think the word 'Giant' is going to make these guys easier to kill? Of course not, goddamit! They're bigger and badder than your decaf Manta, so you'll need to keep up the gunfire for four times as long.

Hit Points: 400

Speed: 320

Sight Radius: 2000

Melee attack/damage: Sting 40, Whip 40

Ranged attack/damage: None

Best way to defeat: Same tactics as normal Manta, but do it for longer.



LESSER BRUTE

These are the first creatures you encounter as you step out of the Vortex Rikers. They are slow, stupid and want to kill you, like every other creature on the planet. They use slow-moving rockets that you can easily dodge at a distance, but don't let them get too close, as they'll pistol-whip your ass. Watch out for their charge, as they can get real close real fast.

Hit Points: 210

Speed: 150

Sight Radius: 1500

Melee attack/damage: Pistol Whip 20

Ranged attack/damage: Missiles 30

Best way to defeat: Keep them at a distance and pump them full of lead from your AutoMag or Dispersion Pistol - there's no need to use a more powerful weapon unless there's more than two of them in close quarters.



BRUTE

Same as the Lesser Brute, but more hit points.

Hit Points: 340

Speed: 140

Sight Radius: 1500

Melee attack/damage: Pistol Whip 20

Ranged attack/damage: Missiles 30

Best way to defeat: Same as the Brute, just keep it up for longer.



BEHEMOTH

The Behemoth is papa Brute - bigger and stronger.

Hit Points: 500

Speed: 150

Sight Radius: 2000

Melee attack/damage:

Pistol Whip 35

Ranged attack/damage: Missiles 30

Best way to defeat: Same as the Brute, just make sure you avoid those missiles.



SLITH

Slith are amphibious creatures that usually work in pairs and know how to dish out the hurt. They move slowly on land, but can swim faster than you underwater. They are also impervious to GES BioRifle attacks.

Hit Points: 210

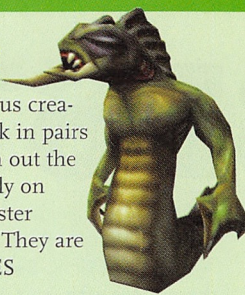
Speed: 250 on land, faster underwater

Sight Radius: 2000

Melee attack/damage: Claw 25

Ranged attack/damage: Acid spit 40

Best way to defeat: Lure them out of the water if you can and use the Eightball gun. If underwater, lay some Minigun fire on them and swim backwards and close to the water's surface.



GASBAG

Big, ugly, floating bag o' hurt is the best way to describe these things.

Gasbags belch noxious gas that gives you tres damage if it hits you, and they will pound you senseless if you get near one. Fortunately they are relatively slow moving.

Hit Points: 220

Speed: 320

Sight Radius: 2000

Melee attack/damage: Pound 25, Punch 12

Ranged attack/damage: Belch 40

Best way to defeat: Keep them at a distance and pump them full of ASMD rounds - a few well aimed shots will take one out.



GIANT GASBAG

Meet Ugly's older brother, Uglier.

Giant Gasbags are bigger, stronger and hurt more than your vanilla Gasbag. Make sure you keep this guy at a distance because his punch will most definitely send you to an early grave.

Hit Points: 600

Speed: 320

Sight Radius: 2000

Melee attack/damage: Pound 65, Punch 40

Ranged attack/damage: Belch 40

Best way to defeat: Same as the Gasbag, although you may want to use some locked-on Eightballs to do some real damage.



KRALL

Krall are one of the intelligent life forms you will encounter on the planet. They are small and weak but pack a staff that fires green bolts of energy like the bad guys in Stargate. Krall usu-



ally hang around in small groups, and like ambushing you. Here's a little tip: aim for their legs because if you take them out, the little suckers will drag themselves around. Very funny to watch.

Hit Points: 180

Speed: 240

Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Pound 20, Strike 20, Throw 30

Ranged attack/damage: Staff 15

Best way to defeat: Don't waste serious ammunition on them. Use your AutoMag or Stinger.

KRALL ELITE

Same as ordinary Krall, but slightly stronger. Use the same tactics as you would for the Krall.

Hit Points: 240

Speed: 240

Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Pound 28, Strike 28, Throw 38

Ranged attack/damage: Staff 15

Best way to defeat: As per Krall.



MERCENARY

Mercenaries are one of the deadliest intelligent aliens on the planet apart from the Skaarj. They can jump and strafe efficiently, use a variety of weapons and also have a shield that renders them invulnerable while it's on, although they can't shoot you either.

Hit Points: 180

Speed: 280

Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Punch 20

Ranged attack/damage: Energy blast 60

Best way to defeat: Forget the Eightball as they will turn on their shields if they see a projectile headed their way. Use the Minigun if you've got it, or a couple of rounds of the sniper rifle to the head.



MERCENARY ELITE

Even worse than the mercenaries, the Mercenary Elite can fire while their shields are up. Run if you encounter one of these guys in an open area as you won't be able to do much against them.

Hit Points: 240

Speed: 280

Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Punch 25

Ranged attack/damage: Energy Blast 60

Best way to defeat: Same tactics as Mercenaries, but duck behind cover if they turn their shield on and wait.



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NALI PRIEST

Not an enemy as such, but rather your only friends on the planet. These guys will lead you to the goodies on each level, so don't hurt them. Protecting them from alien attacks is difficult however, as almost all alien races are out to get the Nali.

Hit Points: 40

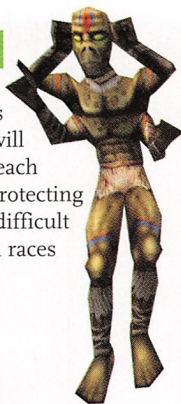
Speed: 300

Sight Radius: 1500

Melee attack/damage: None

Ranged attack/damage: None

Best way to defeat: Erm, don't shoot them.



PUPAE

These guys are one of the scariest creatures in Unreal, particularly if you hate spiders. They hiss and crawl towards you and jump on you if they get close enough. While they don't inflict a huge amount of damage, you never encounter them alone so they have to be dispensed of quickly.

Hit Points: 65

Speed: 260

Sight Radius: 8500

Melee attack/damage: Bite 10, Lunge 20

Ranged attack/damage: None

Best way to defeat: Pupae are difficult to hit with most weapons due to their small size. Either fire an Eightball in to their midst if there are many, or use the Flak Cannon if one gets close.



SKAARJ

The Skaarj are your main foe and also the hardest creatures you'll face. They are not hugely powerful, but have many traits that makes them a challenge for any player: they are fast, agile, dodge attacks exceptionally well, carry weapons like yours, can conduct organised attacks and ambushes and know when to flee to fight another day.

SKAARJ SCOUT

The most agile Skaarj. Comes equipped with a Skaarj laser.

Hit Points: 180

Speed: 440

Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Claw 14,

Lunge 30, Spin 16

Ranged attack/damage: Energy Blast 16

Best way to defeat: Pour it on with instant-hit weapons only.



SKAARJ ASSASSIN

More agile and stronger than the Scout.

Hit Points: 200

Speed: 440

Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Claw 14,

Lunge 30, Spin 16

Ranged attack/damage: Energy Blast 16

Best way to defeat: As per the scout, but apply more hurt.



SKAARJ BERSERKER

Even bigger and stronger than the Assassin.

Hit Points: 320

Speed: 440

Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Claw 20,

Lunge 40, Spin 40

Ranged attack/damage: Energy Blast 16

Best way to defeat: Pray that you have the Minigun when you meet one.



SKAARJ LORD

Like the Berserker, except Skaarj Lords can lead other Skaarj for coordinated attacks.

Hit Points: 320

Speed: 440

Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Claw 20, Lunge 35, Spin 35

Ranged attack/damage: Energy Blast 16

Best way to defeat: If in a group, take out the Lord first.



ICE SKAARJ

Weaker, but faster than most other Skaarj.

Hit Points: 210

Speed: 440

Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Claw

14, Lunge 30, Spin 16

Ranged attack/damage:

Energy Blast 16

Best way to defeat: Take advantage of their lower hit points by using more powerful weapons - the Minigun is your best bet.



SKAARJ GUNNER

Look out! The Gunner carries an Eightball gun, so you'll need to watch their every move.

Hit Points: 220

Speed: 400

Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Claw 10, Lunge 20,

Spin 15

Ranged attack/damage: Rockets 80, Grenades 100

Best way to defeat: They are not as agile as the others are, so you can use weapons like the Flak Cannon and Eightball gun against them effectively.



SKAARJ INFANTRY

Slightly weaker than the Gunner, the Skaarj Infantry carry Stingers.

Hit Points: 170

Speed: 400

Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Claw 10,

Lunge 20, Spin 15

Ranged attack/damage:

Tarydium shards 14

Best way to defeat: Flak Cannon or Eightball.



"It would be a sad error in judgement to mistake me for a ghost" - Kane



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SKAARJ SNIPER

The Skaarj Sniper is one of the deadliest of the weapon-wielding Skaarj as he is extremely accurate with the Assault Rifle. Fortunately, he doesn't have a huge amount of hit points, but you still need to play it safe.

Hit Points: 140

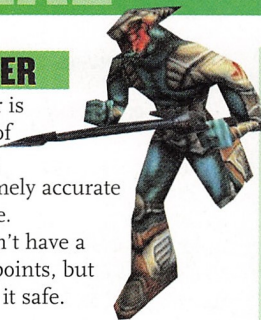
Speed: 400

Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Claw 10, Lunge 20, Spin 15

Ranged attack/damage: Assault Rifle 45

Best way to defeat: Your best bet is to close on this guy and let loose with the Flak Cannon if you can, because you won't stand a chance at a distance - he's probably more accurate than you are with the Assault Rifle.



SKAARJ OFFICER

This bad hombre carries a RazorJack with your name on it. Enough said.

Hit Points: 140

Speed: 400

Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Claw 10, Lunge 20, Spin 15

Ranged attack/damage: Razors 30

Best way to defeat: Use the Sniper rifle from a distance - zoom in and go for head shots.



TITAN

Titans are physically the biggest foe you'll face in Unreal, as well as one of the toughest. One stone thrown by a Titan can kill you instantly, and he can make the ground shake so you lose your footing. Thankfully, you won't encounter too many of these guys in the game.

Hit Points: 1200

Speed: 400

Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Punch 70, Slap 80

Ranged attack/damage: Hurled rocks 40

Best way to defeat: Um, never encounter one. If you must, charge up the Eightball gun with six rounds and fire in tight cluster formation when you have a lock. Of course, you need to avoid the boulders he's throwing at the same time...



STONE TITAN

Same as the Titan but with more hitpoints. Oh what joy.

Hit Points: 1500

Speed: 400



Sight Radius: 2500

Melee attack/damage: Punch 70, Slap 80

Ranged attack/damage: Hurled rocks 40

Best way to defeat: Same as the Titan but for longer.

WARLORD

The Warlord is a flying Skaarj variant with a meaner disposition and heat-seeking missiles - not a good combination. These guys are strong and like the Skaarj are excellent at dodging.

Hit Points: 1500

Speed: 440

Sight Radius: 3000

Melee attack/damage: Strike 40

Ranged attack/damage: Heat-seeking missiles 35

Best way to defeat: If you absolutely must pick a fight with one of these guys, forget the Eightball Gun as they'll dodge it. Stick with the Sniper Rifle and keep him at a distance. If he gets too close you can try the Flak Cannon, but if he's that close you're probably toast anyway.



QUEEN

The final boss is definitely a nasty piece of work. The Queen has multiple attacks, moves fast, can teleport, has an obscene amount of hit points and can spawn many pupae at a time.

Hit Points: 1000

Speed: 500

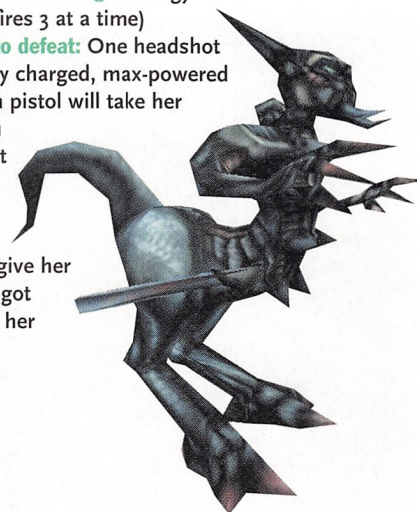
Sight Radius: 3000

Melee attack/damage: Claw 40,

Stab 40

Ranged attack/damage: Energy Blast 16 (fires 3 at a time)

Best way to defeat: One headshot with a fully charged, max-powered dispersion pistol will take her out. If you don't want to take this easy way out, then just give her all you've got and avoid her attacks.



UNREAL

DEATHMATCH TACTICS

Unreal deathmatch is a truly awesome experience. The huge variety of weapons and weapon modes will excite most players, but the somewhat slower gameplay may disappoint many in the same way that many were let down by Quake2. Personally, I couldn't care less about your philosophical viewpoint on the development of the 3D deathmatch game; I'm just here to give you some deathmatch tips. So here they are:

When is a rocket not a rocket?

The Eightball Gun is NOT like the rocket launcher in Quake, OK? Deal with it - it's slower than the rocket launcher in Quake 2, takes longer to load and you have to let go of the button and depress it again for repetitive firing. This does not make it a weaker weapon, because it's one of the only weapons in Unreal that dishes out a lot of damage very quickly, and its splash damage lets you be a little careless with aiming, as well as being able to damage more than one foe. In general, aim for your enemy's feet as a dodge or sidestep will render your attack useless. Try to load more than one Eightball if you're firing rockets as one rocket alone will not kill a fully healthy opponent. Use grenades at close range but be careful - they do more damage and have a wider area of effect. They also bounce a lot more and will damage you just like an enemy, so don't use them when the opposite wall is just metres away because if you miss and cop a rebound, well, you get to see some of Unreal's cool bodily explosions up close.

Oh, is that your head I just blew off?

Learn how to aim for the head. True, headshots are more difficult, but because they do double damage it's worth practising. If you're using the mouse with freelook (the only way to play deathmatch), just aim a little higher than you ordinarily would. If you're using the keyboard, learn how to use the mouse.



S/h/it (She/He/It)

Learn how to use the different classes effectively. Sure it's easy to take the Skaarj in deathmatch because he has more hit points than the humans, but he's slower than the male and female characters and he's bigger too. That might not mean much in other deathmatch games you've played, but in Unreal hits are measured against the actual volume of a character, not a box representing their three dimensions. This means bigger characters are hit more easily, just like in real life.

It all comes down to your priorities

Set up weapon prioritisation in the multiplayer menu. In Quake and Quake2, this could only be achieved by fiddly manipulation of your config file. Unreal lets you do this via a menu selection, so take the easy

way out. Prioritise instant hit weapons first in order of damage and ease of use, then all your weapons that require leading. Unreal also lets you prioritise the different levels of Dispersion pistol, so that if you have a Dispersion Pistol Power 5, it's not at the bottom of your list. A good order is something like Dispersion Pistol Power 5, Minigun, Assault Rifle, Flak Cannon, Dispersion Pistol Power 4, Eightball Gun, ASMD, RazorJack, Dispersion Pistol Power 3, GES BioRifle, AutoMag, Dispersion Pistol Power 2, Stinger, Dispersion Pistol.

Weapon orientation

For those of you unaccustomed to this option, this is where you would like your weapon placed on the screen - left, centre or right. Now much of this will come down to personal preference, and most Quakers

**GDI and Nod are back.
Brace yourself**



UNREAL



will argue to the death that centred weapons are the way to go, but there are arguments for and against. Weapon orientation can have a big effect on the way you play. Centred weapons allow for the most accurate aiming and you don't accidentally fire an Eightball into the wall you were hiding behind on your left because you were holding your gun in that hand. Left or right centred weapons tend to get in the way less because they don't block the field of view in front of you, and they also let you poke less of your body around a corner, almost like sticking your hand around the corner. This obviously only works around left hand bends if you're right-handed, with the opposite for left-handed players.

Dodging as a legitimate tactic (and excuse not to go to work today)

It remains to be seen how popular this new and ultra-cool addition is to death-matching. For those who have been too scared to try it, if you enable dodging and tap the strafe left or right key in quick succession, you will quickly roll in that direction. Will it be as vaguely useful as ducking your opponent's missiles? Or will it turn into an oft-used tactic like rocket-jumping? Only time and low-ping servers (one day the dream will come true) will tell.

Practice muchly against bots

Do it and do it now, goddamit! Back in the good ol' days when we had to trudge 40 miles through the snow naked to get to school, bots were a bit of a novelty. Sure they were cool to practice against, but most had stupid AI and were painfully difficult to install and configure. This is where Unreal comes to the rescue. It has bot-matches built-in as a game option, all menu-driven of course, so you can easily play against computer-controlled opponents to practice rendering your mates limb from limb. The best part is that they were programmed by Stephen Polge, the guy who coded the most popular bot ever, the Reaper bot for Quake. You'll have a tough time beating them on the harder difficulty levels, but think of what those 14-year old kids who do nothing but play Unreal all day, every day, will do to you if you don't practice.

ONLINE RESOURCES

OK, so it doesn't have the same amount of work and modifications pumped into it as the great Q/Q2, but it's getting there and better network code is coming so that it plays smoothly over the net. Two huge plusses to the game and one that the team at Epic should be thoroughly commended on, is the addition of a scripting language and UnrealEd with the full release of the game. The scripting language is easier to use than QuakeC and of course, C itself, so that budding game developers can have a crack at making that next killer mod, if not the next TeamFortress. UnrealEd is also a lot easier to use than QaRk or WorldCraft so you can create and playtest a new level literally within minutes. Thankfully, due to the Net being the giving kind of place that it is, there's a virtual motherload of resources online to help you get started, or to download if the bog-standard experience is boring you already.

<http://www.unreal.com>

- The official Unreal site. Surprisingly, some of the best resources come from the games developers themselves, so you know anything on this site is not going to wipe your D:\ drive full of GIFs.

<http://www.unrealnation.com>

- Unreal Nation is a fansite devoted to news, rumours and all things Unreal. Their file archive is a cooperative effort with The Absolute Quake Files Archive, which means if you can't find it here, it doesn't exist.

<http://unreal.net.au>

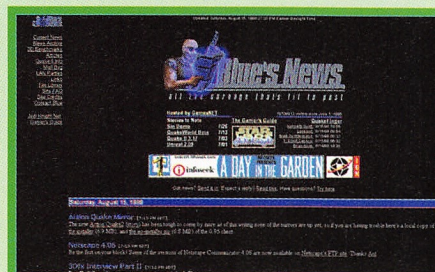
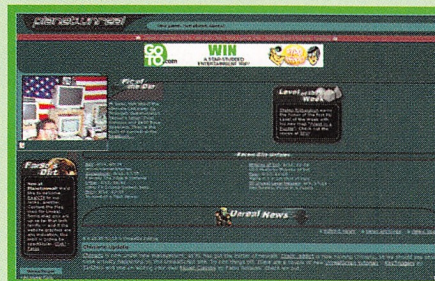
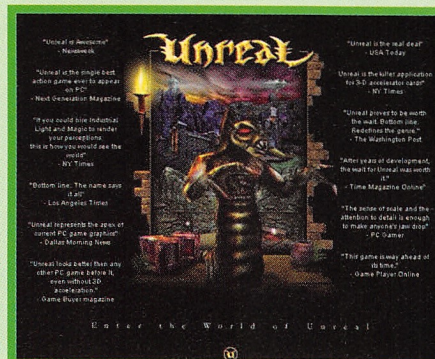
- As the name suggests, Unreal News Australia is devoted to news from around the world, as well as a heavy dose of local content.

<http://www.planetunreal.com>

- Modelled very much on PlanetQuake, PlanetUnreal is as diverse and comprehensive as its sister site. Full of news, reviews, links, files, mods, editing utilities etc, this is one jam-packed site.

<http://www.unrealed.com>

- Again as the name suggests, unrealed.com is devoted to Unreal editing in all forms, from levels to skins to mods to TC's. It contains work done by other people as well as tutorials to get you up and running.



<http://www.bluesnews.com>

- Originally a Quake only site, Blue's News has expanded to include most 3D games, and now features just as much Unreal content as Quake/Quake II. More news than anything else, it does have some very useful links though.

[news:alt.games.unreal](http://news.alt.games.unreal)

- Well, you couldn't bring out a game as huge as Unreal and not expect a news site to spring up. alt.games.unreal is the people's forum, a place to discuss the good, the bad and the downright ugly when it comes to all things Unreal. As with all news groups, parental guidance (or someone who isn't offended by copious profanities) is advised.

Oh in case you don't know, the latest version is 2.09. This patch optimises some network elements and is still compatible with older versions and saved games. Grab it from <http://unreal.epicgames.com/Files/UnrealBeta209.zip>.

UNREAL

CHEAT
CODES

For all the lamers out there, here is a list of some Unreal cheat codes for use when you just cannot beat the Queen with every conceivable weapon and piece of armour. Two of the coolest cheatcodes are the Behindview command which lets you switch to 3rd-person perspective (get used to it before Heretic II hits) and Playersonly, which freezes everything except real players, including missiles that have been launched.

ALLAMMO 999 ammo for all guns

FLY Self-explanatory

GHOST Walk through walls

WALK Returns from FLY or GHOST mode

GOD Self-explanatory

AMPHIBIOUS Unlimited air supply (for swimming under water)

PLAYERSONLY Freezes time (repeat to resume normally)

OPEN MAPNAME Jumps to any map. Example: OPEN DIG (A list of all the maps can be found in your unreal/maps directory)

BEHINDVIEW 1 Tomb Raider Perspective

BEHINDVIEW 0 Return first-person perspective

FLUSH Removes garbage graphics if they appear

SUMMON <item> Summons a weapon or item, including monsters. Some examples are:

nali

skaarjwarrior

dispersionpistol

automag

stinger

asmd

eightball

flakcannon

razorjack

gesbiorifle

rifle
minigun
superhealth
health
scubagear
shieldbelt
translator
voicebox
quadshot
peacemaker
amplifier
dampener
flare
flashlight
forcefield
invisibility
jumpboots

Console Commands

This is the fiddly stuff for the more adventurous out there, or those that want to squeeze a couple of extra frames per second out of their machine. Some good ones are:

NOSOUND Disables sound

SERVER Runs as a dedicated server

LOG=logfilename Uses the specified log file instead of Unreal.log. Useful when running multiple copies on the same machine

INI=inifilename Sets the .ini file to use for configuration, normally Unreal.ini

READINI=inifilename Sets the .ini file for reading only (not for writing); overrides the INI= option

PORT=num Sets the UDP port number for the Internet server

MULTIHOME=12.34.56.78 Sets the "home" IP address (in numerical format) for Unreal of a machine with multiple network cards

EXEC filename Execute the console com-

mands in the filename, default is in the System directory

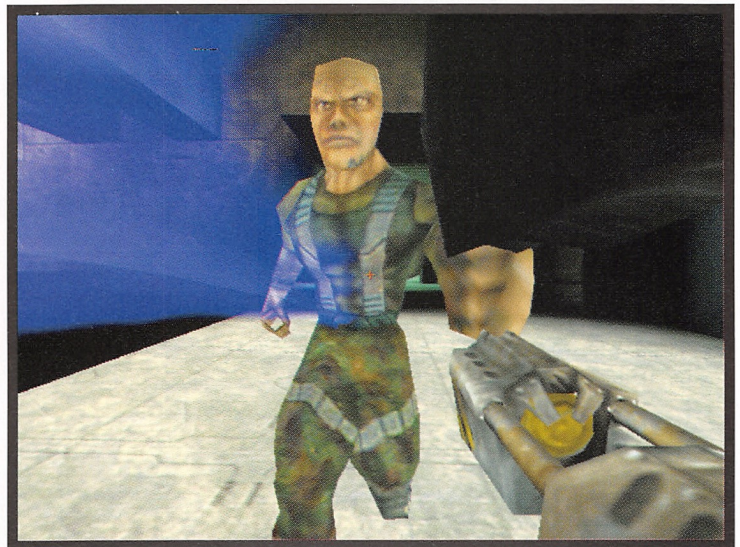
FOV angle Set the field of view, for example "FOV 90" for 90 degrees

SHOT Take a screenshot and save it in the System directory with a consecutive name like Shot0001.bmp

ADDBOTS <number> Adds more bots to the game

KILLPAWNS Kills all monsters

For a full list of all Unreal console commands, hit <http://unreal.epicgames.com> and follow the links.



COMMAND & CONQUER TIBERIAN SUN

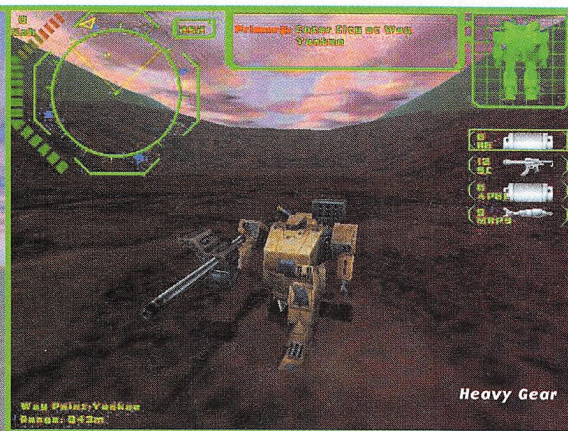
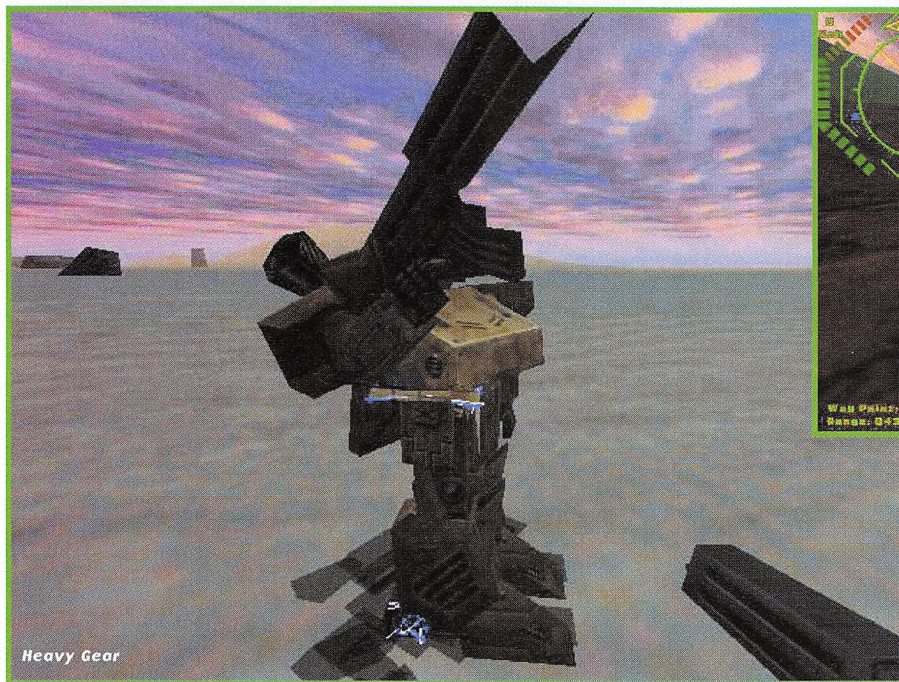


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TIPS & TACTICS

Get better faster



ammo. Even better, fire your own guided missiles and bazookas from just behind the crest of hills.

★ Always make use of cover, but make sure you are well clear of obstructions before firing any explosive ordnance.

MORTAL KOMBAT 4

★ **Alternate costumes:** Press Start and any action button to rotate the select screen pictures two times to enable each character's second costume, except for Sonya and Tanya. The select screen pictures must be rotated three times for those characters.

★ **Fight as Meat:** Enter "Group Mode" and successfully complete the game with all sixteen characters. After this has been accomplished, select any character and begin a match. Your character will be playing as Meat with all the moves of the character that was selected.

★ **Fight as Goro:** Successfully complete the game with Shinnok. Enter the character selection screen, choose the HIDDEN icon using RUN, and keep holding it, then press UP, UP, UP, LEFT to highlight Shinnok's icon, and press BLOCK while still holding RUN.

★ **Fight as Noob Saibot:** Successfully complete the game with Reiko. Enter the 012 012 Kombat code in versus mode. Exit this match and enter the character selection screen, choose the HIDDEN icon using RUN, and keep holding it, then press UP, UP, LEFT to highlight Reiko's icon, and press BLOCK while still holding RUN.

★ **Single player stage select:** Enter the Practice menu and select the stage that appears prior to the desired stage that you wish to start at. Start a practice mode match, then immediately quit. Start a single player game to begin at the desired stage.

ECSTATICA II

★ When the game begins, find a weapon immediately. The easiest one to get to is in a back room of the stable: When you see the hole in the floor, hit the spacebar to climb down the ladder and pick up the magic wand in the corner.

★ Anything made of plain wood should be attacked, as it may yield goodies. Kick in doors, smash chests and cabinets, punch switches and levers. Some levers and switches are disguised, so whacking torches isn't a bad idea, either.

★ The stone golems are among the most obnoxious monsters of the game, until you realize their Achilles' heel: they attack slower than you! If you step in close and keep hitting them with a weapon or even a double-punch, your knock back will keep them from counterattacking effectively until they're dead.

HEAVY GEAR

★ Only depend on your wheeled speed to protect you from enemy fire while moving at a tangent to your opponents; if they are behind or in front, you will lack the maneuverability to dodge their shots.

★ Use sharp hills to hide from guided rounds until your opponents run dry on

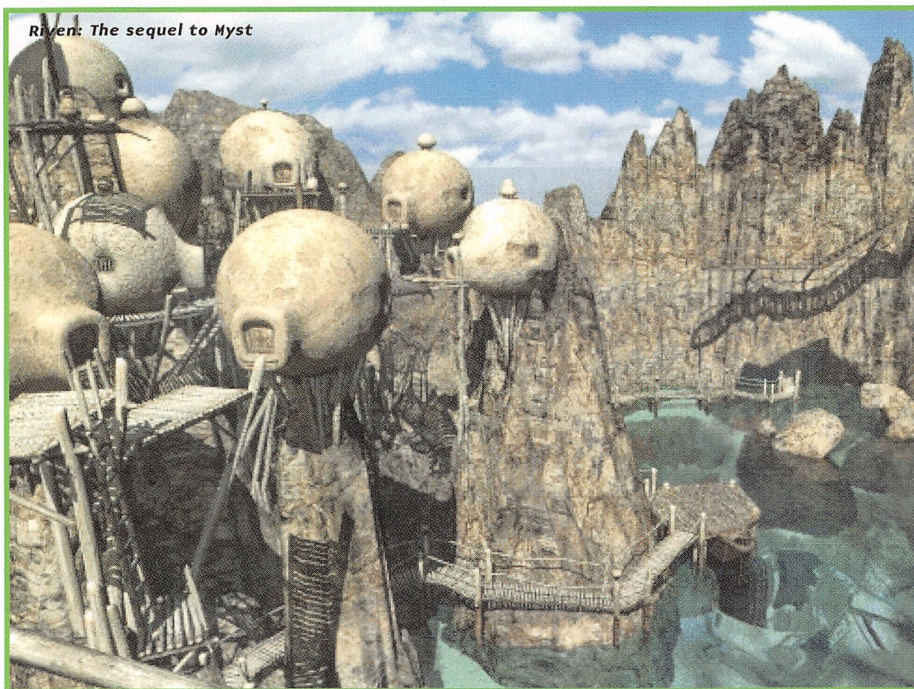
IMPERIALISM

★ You can lay the foundations for victory by carefully examining the map when the game begins. Where are the horses? Who's going to start out short on lumber? Who has the terrain to provide coal and iron in the long run? These sorts of questions can serve as a crystal ball for how the game will progress.

★ Save up for a rainy day: stockpiled products are rarely useless for long. If you're avoiding military development, be sure to have plenty of armaments and horses ready for the belligerents who are sure to come calling.

★ Some battles, especially attacks on capitals, should be fought over the course of several turns as a series of hit and runs. Inflict losses (artillery is good for this) and retreat before you lose any units. Repeat as necessary.





Riven: The sequel to Myst

RIVEN: THE SEQUEL TO MYST

- ★ When you find yourself facing a locked door, try going around the back way. There's usually some way to come at the problem from the other side.
- ★ Keep in mind that whenever you go through a roller-coaster sequence and change discs, you are almost invariably going to another island. One way to keep your mapping and your puzzles straight is to avoid switching islands until you have a pretty good idea where everything is and you've pulled every lever and switch you can find.
- ★ On the Boiler Island, try closing doors behind you; you never know what might be hiding in the corner.
- ★ On Jungle Island, turn up the speakers and listen as you touch the wooden eyes. There are sound clues as well as hidden symbols.

3D ULTRA MINIGOLF

- ★ **Haunted House Hole:** To get a hole in one, hit the ball from the tee to the light grave on the left side of the house. If you do this correctly the ball will come out the back of the house. This only works on the first shot.
- ★ **Abominable Snowman Hole:** Putt into the middle tunnel for a hole in one.
- ★ **Moon Base Hole:** Hit your ball into the metro station when the sign says 3. If you don't time it correctly, the ball will fall into the construction pit.
- ★ **Jungle Hole:** Across from the pyramid with the hole there is a pool of water. Putt your ball at the bird next to the water. The bird will pick up the ball and drop it in the cup.



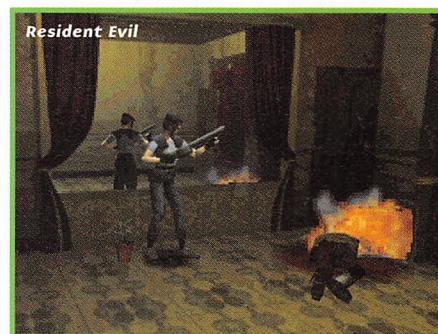
Riven: The sequel to Myst

MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR 98

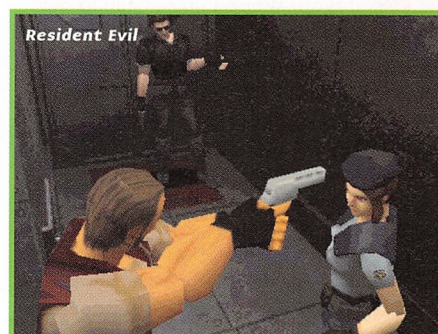
- ★ The Airport/Facility Directory is the best way to quickly find information about specific airports from which you wish to take flight.
- ★ Flight Simulator has a worldwide following that you can tap into. Start by clicking on the "Microsoft On The Web" button in the Help menu.
- ★ The online Aircraft Handbooks on the CD-ROM provide detailed information on each aircraft in FS98, including the basic flight instruments you need to get started.
- ★ When beginning, select Half Speed from the Options/Simulation Rate menu to give yourself time to get acclimated.

RESIDENT EVIL

- ★ Getting the Star Crest: using Jill, go to the Gallery Hall where crows are perched on the track lighting. Examine each painting and push the switches in this order: newborn, infant, lively boy, young man, tired middle aged, old man. Do not shoot the crows. Now press the switch near the painting displaying the message and get the Star Crest.
- ★ Finding the Mansion Key: use the Golden Emblem you found in the Piano Parlour in the empty slot above the fireplace. Now take the Mansion Key from behind the clock.
- ★ For a Caretaker's Surprise: in the Caretaker's room, pick up the clip from the bed, then walk over to the desk and try to pick up the diary.



Resident Evil



Resident Evil

ORACLE

Need help with a game? Seek spiritual guidance with the Oracle.

Thanks for all the letters flooding my domain, especially the ones with the gifts. To that sweet little old lady from Lithgow, thanks for the sponge cake, but next time you might want to try using a box when sending it through the post. Oh yeah and add some more milk to give it that extra fluff...If you want your letters answered quickly you might want to try sending some of those nice doughnuts with the sprinkly stuff on top, I like those...

Write to Oracle at:

ORACLE
PC POWERPLAY
78 RENWICK ST.
REDFERN
NSW 2016
ORACLE@PCPOWERPLAY.NEXT.COM.AU

EARTHSIEGE 3



I am finally on the moon and get to a screen that immediately starts off saying "mission failure"...why? Has it got anything to do with a previous mission I stuffed up?

Michael Porfirio
Camperdown, NSW



Yes it does. It has been a while so I forget the name of the mission, but I've seen this happen to numerous others. On one of the first missions you were to capture a base or something. You can not destroy ANY buildings on this base (which you take over for your own use) or this later mission fails. There's no easy way around the problem. The only option you have is to restore from a saved game prior to the mission in question and replay it (hope you have one). When you are sent to capture the base, better leave your wingmen out of range with hold orders or something. They aren't too smart and are likely to blaze away at the buildings.

FINAL FANTASY 7



I am stuck fighting this bothersome dragon. When I go outside to heal the wounds inflicted upon me and my group I come back and he has also healed? What am I doing wrong! Do I need some special spell(s), do I need to be upgraded more than I am? HELP!

Elizabeth Cameron
Ermington, NSW



C'mon don't you know, all dragons heal when you leave their area, even if you are only away for 10

seconds. It's common folklore. All you need to do is be strong enough. Find out what resistances the dragon has, eg which spells work on him best. Link the Heal and All materias on your weapons to heal all your party at once in battle. Do this every round if you need to. Limit break attacks work really well against tougher baddies, as do summon materia.

JOHNNY BEAVER



I've been playing the Adventures Of Johnny Beaver for a while now, and I'm stuck in the stripclub. My buddy reckons I'm supposed to throw a pizza at the fat tabledancer, but I can't find it. Where do I get the pizza?

A. Kontogiorgis
Internet



First, you shoot the bouncer at the door. A business card slips out of his jacket pocket, and that's where you get it from. If you're still hungry, you can get a great one from Papa Angelo's at Ashfield. I like the Margarita myself.

LAST EXPRESS



I'm on the roof but I can't seem to get into the prince's car. I read the walkthrough that you are supposed to break the glass but I can't even look at it. Any idea what I'm doing wrong?

Kellie Churchley
Internet



Have you gone the right way? You may be looking at the wrong car. The baggage car has a raised section with windows in, but the prince's car has a large section of the roof made of glass. You need to jump on it to get through.

NEVERHOOD



I'm stuck in a particular place early in The Neverhood. I can't get the door with the skull/water and pipes to open. I have been advised that I need to drink the water from the skull. I can't make it happen. I have: gotten out of my room, solved the puzzle and seen the TV where you put the disks in. I've gone through the TNT room, met the monster and did him in, rode the chair in the monster's cave, opened the door with the skull and pressed the button that starts the water, gone back through the TNT room to the other skull and the pipes, pressed the button on the wall and the one on the ground. I still can't get anything to happen. Is there something I'm missing? I'm not impressed...

Jon Powell
Internet



You have to drink water and then spit it in the pipes. The puzzle trick is that you can spit more than once into the pipe, thus changing the sound produced by it. Match the sound of the pipes to the sound of the door and you're in. I'm sure you'll get the hang of it with all your gargling experience.



PANDORA DIRECTIVE



I am still stuck on this puzzle box in The Pandora Directive. This is the last Puzzle box in the game and how do I get the marble pieces in the grooves?

Linda Gammie

Winston Hills, NSW



Remember, when you place a piece correctly, it 'snaps' into place. So, have you tried placing a few of those perfectly symmetrical pieces in a different way than is immediately obvious? It's easy once you get the hang of it.

SEARCH FOR THE KING



Well I know this is quite an old game but I was wondering if someone could help me out. I have played this game up to the desert but I can never seem to get out of the desert. Could you please give me directions as to how to get out of there? Thanks so much.

Penny Lane

Internet



All you have to do is drink the water which is in the thermos. You did get and fill the thermos with water back in New York, didn't you?

SHIVERS 2



Okay, I'm pretty much finished but the big bad ghost tells me I must complete the sand picture before I can summon the power. What sand picture? I've got both broken pieces. I haven't gotten into the safety deposit box in the bank because it takes 2 keys and for the life of me I can only find one. Help, please.

George "Axman"

Internet



The sand you need to complete the painting is in the safety deposit box. One key can be found on the floor in the locked room in the library, the other is under Burt's trailer.

THE DIG



I'm stuck in the Dig. The game wasn't that hard at all and I came quite far in a couple of days, but now I have spent about 2 weeks or so without moving any further. The problem is, I have to put the bones of some alien creature perfectly right so that I can make them alive with a life crystal. But I just don't seem to do it right. Everytime I think I put all the bones right he just falls apart when I made him live again. I have tried a walkthrough but it was too difficult to understand it for me. Could you give me a description?

Howie Long

South Yarra, Vic



This must be your lucky day. To assemble the turtle look-alike creature take a close look at the fossil at your left, just next to the passage leading back to the tram. When you've got each bone so they look perfect, turn one of them around. One of the bones looks like it should go one direction when it really goes the other.

TOMB RAIDER



Can you tell me how to open the 4 doors with the "vooo" letters above them. This would be of a great help because it has been doing my head in.

Sylvia Samaan

Marrickville, NSW



Since you didn't mention which level you are on, I'll have to guess. You will need to make a mental connection between the 'numerical' panel and the lever panel on the roof across the room. In the room where the four doors are there's also a place with five levers in a row. The signs above each door correspond with these levers: the "V" (Gamma) sign signifies a down lever, the "O" (Omega) sign signifies an up lever. For each door, note the code above it and set the levers according to that code - that way the door will open.

TOMB RAIDER 2



I'm totally and utterly stuck in Tomb Raider 2, the best game in gaming history. The Opera House has me stumped. I've made it to what looks like a changing room, a room with lots of broken mirrors and clothes racks, I've pulled the only lever in the room and went down the slides to the metal tunnels with the fans in them. I've found the ornate key and have made it to the tunnel with the rat in it. I've killed the poor little thing with my M16 and am now wondering where to go next as all tunnels lead to death. Please help me.

Chris Roche

Mundaring WA



Today is not your day, and tomorrow doesn't look too good either. Just pick any tunnel, and next time try sending me some doughnuts.

X FILES



Where is the train car at the train station? I climbed the pole over 4 times but cannot find the 5 digit number for the car I'm supposed to go into. I used the binoculars but don't see anything unusual... What should I be looking for?

Tom Hopkins

Ipswich, QLD



Your problem is that you like climbing poles (probably stems from your childhood or something). Use your binoculars when you climb the pole ONCE and look again for the numbered car.

X FILES



I'm at the base and I have run into Mulder and I have told Scully to run. After that I keep getting killed by someone in army jeans. I can't use my gun nor can I walk anywhere except into the room that has the guy that kills me. I could sure use some help...LOTS of it!

Mike Nann

Drummoyn, NSW



I assume this is the first time you see the Infected Mulder. Okay, after you tell Scully to run, you automatically turn right, and start off facing a hall. But when you move forward into that hall, the guard shoots you with no way to react, right? Okay, what you need to do is make an additional turn to the right to sneak up on the guard; his back will be to you, and you can now shoot him at your leisure.

9



I have just started playing this game, and I'm already in trouble: I try to get past a couple of stone statues, but they won't let me. What do I have to do? I have tried to play the organ, but I'm not sure if I play it right. I have looked at the sheet music, and have tried to play it according to the strange "letters" on it. Could you please help me figure this out?

Mr Hanky

Internet



Hey, I'm too busy trying to figure you out. The solution is to play the organ the right way. Sounds like you are playing it too soon in the game. Be sure to play all 8 tones and have no organ register pulled. Once you play it the right way the 'tiki' guards will happily let you through.

CODE

Cheat a little

JACK NICKLAUS 5

Secret opponent:

Create a computer golfer who is female, pro, plays from the black tee and has the name Barbara Nicklaus.

Type while playing:

superball - High bounce

molehill - Big hills

waxanerd - Play Whack-A-Nerd.

POWERBOAT RACING

Password:

FAN - Catamarans (Minnow)

DIP - Catamarans (Pike)

URN - Catamarans (Barracuda)

EPS - Championship mode

PBR - Slalom

PDL - Hidden track

Cheats: (Enter your name as these)

SML - Small Boat mode

BIG - Big head mode

POW - Big engine mode

BAA - Races for you

WIN - always win races

JAZZ JACKRABBIT 2

Cheat codes

Enter these during the game

jigod - God mode

jjinv - God mode

jguns - All weapons

jjammo - All ammo

jjrush - Sugar rush

jjfly - Helicopter ears, type again for hover-board

jjk - Self destruct

jjshield - Power shield

jjnext - Level skip

jjlight - Fully light level

jjbird - Bird assistance

jjcoins - Get coins

jjgems - Get gems

jjending - Return to main menu

jjq - Quit to desktop

jjmorph - Change into Spaz, type again to become Bird, type again to become Frog, type a fourth time to change back to Jazz

DIE BY THE SWORD

Cheat codes

During gameplay, hold F1 and type in these codes:

MUKOR God mode

DEDLY Multiply sword damage by 10

GOLRG Giant player

BTINY Tiny player

SILKY Freeze enemies

PEACE Kill enemies

AGRAV Limb gravity

LUNAR Lunar gravity

QSAVE Quick Save

PAUSE Pause game

FRAME Screen Shot

TOUGH Difficult level

MECAM First person view

GOCAM Stationary cam

SPCAM Enemy cam

BAMFF Warp to end level

GAMMA Change gamma level

SEPKU You die

IFALL Knock you off your feet

HICUP Throw you around

FUNKY Funky keys toggle

CATCH Out of world trapping toggle

AIAIM See enemies targeting info

BZONE WireFrame/ Shading/ Nothing/ Normal

FPERS Shows "Sound Cache Misses"

GOURA Gourad shading

NTRUD Select enemy

PLANE Show protection and damage points

NFADE Pallate fading toggle

GMODE Fast cycles

COLID Shows possible collision locations

FREEZ Turn off enemy AI

GHOST Turn off enemy physics

DEATHRAP DUNGEON

Cheat codes

Type while playing:

ELVIS - Invulnerability

TOOLS - All Weapons

TAXI - Level Skip

MMMUNGO - Strength

BILLY - Speed

CAFFEINE - Health

BALLS OF STEEL

Cheat codes

First press the Print Screen key, then type in the cheat codes.

bucket Kickbacks recharged

couch potato Video modes ready

evil twin 2-ball ready

freakshow Extra ball lit

nerf gun Super cannon ready

popcorn Super pops lit

roach motel Crawler attack lit

t-minus 1 Target practice ready

t-minus 2 Bug hunt ready

t-minus 3 Guard duty ready

t-minus 4 Xenophobia ready

t-minus 5 Meteor storm ready

t-minus 6 Rescue ready

t-minus 7 Showdown ready

t-minus 8 Final assault ready

triplets 3-ball ready

warp core Powerball enabled

FIFA 98

Cheat codes

In the Player Edit, edit any player name to these names and a Special



COMMANDOS

Cheat code

Type "**1982GONZO**" during the game. (There is no zero in this cheat code). If that doesn't work, try "**GONZO1982**" instead.

Now, you have the following options:

SHIFT+V: Trace user.

SHIFT+X: Tele-transport. (place the selected commandos under your mouse cursor)

CTRL+I: You are invincible.

CTRL+SHIFT+N: Finish the mission.

Options box should appear:

JOHNNY ATOMIC Take A Dive

DOHDOHDOH Crazy Ball

URLOFUS Invisible Walls

XPLAY Hot Potato

FOOTY Silly Moves

EAC ROCKS Big Head Mode

GRAND THEFT AUTO

[BY POPULAR DEMAND]

Cheat codes

The codes must be typed in as your name, but after you have typed them and pressed enter you will be able to put in your name. Codes are case sensitive.

6031769 grants unlimited lives.

buckfast * on the keypad grants all weapons.

hate machine raises all point values.

iamthelaw eliminates police.

itcouldbeyou grants 99999999 points.

itsgallus grants access to all levels and cities.

itstantrum grants unlimited lives.

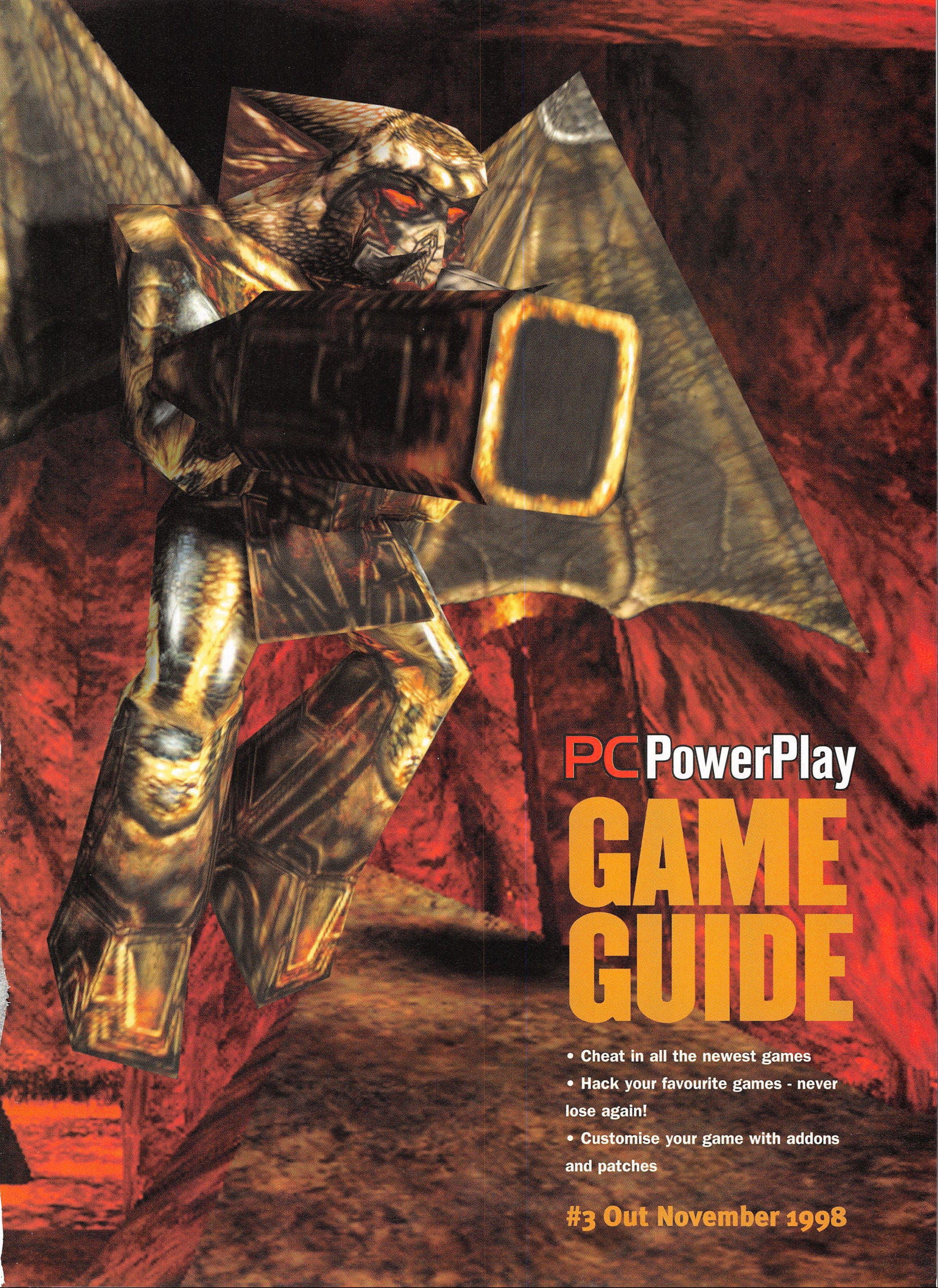
nineinarow grants access to all levels and cities.

porkcharsui toggles diagnostic mode.

stevesmates eliminates police.

suckmyrocket grants all weapons, full armour and a get out of jail free card

super well grants access to all levels and cities.



PC PowerPlay GAME GUIDE

- Cheat in all the newest games
- Hack your favourite games - never lose again!
- Customise your game with addons and patches

#3 Out November 1998

It takes a special kind of person to write a setup column. He scares the hell out of us, but that person is Ashton Mills. Fear him.

WHEN YOU WRITE, REMEMBER TO INCLUDE AS MUCH PERTINENT INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE. SEND YOUR CONFIG.SYS AND AUTOEXEC.BAT AND ANY ASSOCIATED *.INI FILES FOR WINDOWS THAT MIGHT TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR PROBLEM. GIVE ME AS DETAILED AN EXPLANATION AS YOU CAN AND BE SURE TO INCLUDE AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE ABOUT YOUR PC. FEEL FREE TO EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS OR, IF YOU WANT TO SNAIL MAIL, PLEASE REMEMBER TO WRITE CLEARLY OR BETTER STILL, PRINT YOUR LETTERS. PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO THE VOLUME OF MESSAGES WE RECEIVE, WE CANNOT GUARANTEE A RESPONSE TO YOUR QUERIES.

Setup
PC PowerPlay
78 Renwick st.
Redfern
NSW 2016
setup@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

FASTER FAT?

Q I'm hoping you can shed some light on this matter. My PC is formatted with FAT32. As I have a 3.2 gig HDD, I believed this was preferable, as FAT16 couldn't recognise drives above 2 gig and results in wasted or "slack" space.

But I understand that certain games will run better using FAT16. I've just recently bought Unreal, and on my system (AMD K6 200, 32meg RAM and 3Dfx) it runs well, but of course is just a little choppy in some areas of the game.

I know that the AMD chip doesn't have the same floating point performance as its Intel counterpart, and accept that I'll suffer a performance loss due to this, but what I'm wondering is, would using FAT16 make any difference with games such as this?

Steve Walley
Woodend

A No. FAT32 is, actually, a little slower because of the way it's designed and it does take up more memory to hold the look up tables, but this performance degradation is really negligible. Ultimately the best performance booster you can get for Unreal is RAM (well, after a 3D card). However you can improve disk performance, for anything you load, by optimising your drive. Just run

Disk Defragmenter. If you're using Windows 98, it'll even go one step further and optimise where your applications sit on your drive to improve load times even more.

MULTI-MODEM PLAY

Q I was wondering if it is possible to make a 3-way modem connection for games such as Starcraft and Total Annihilation so me and my two mates can all play against each other at once.

Doug Adams
Internet

A Technically it is possible, if you use a PS/2 mouse and both your COM ports are free for modems — but only if the game supports it. No games support this, however, and are unlikely to ever do so. Games are rapidly moving to the TCP/IP model because it's a protocol that can be used on both local networks as well as the Internet. The best way to play multiplayer games, apart from a networking weekend with your pals, is over the Internet. Games like TA allow you to be host to up to 8 players over the Internet, and any lag a player experiences is equal to the quality of their connection.

HOW BIG IS WINDOWS?

Q Hi. I was in a computer shop in the city the other day and I overheard a salesman talking to a guy about Windows 98.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

UNDERSTANDING THE BUS

Q Being such technical geniuses, you guys would probably be able to answer these questions off the top of your heads without looking at reference material. At what speed does the PCI bus run on a 100MHz board? If 50MHz is correct (half, as in 66mhz boards) then wouldn't PCI cards have a serious problem with this bus speed? In your overclocking article you stated that high bus speeds could be a problem for some PCI cards. I just want to understand how it works. Can you help?

Theodore Tsalacopoulos
Internet

A Excellent question Theodore. Here's the deal: Traditionally the system bus runs at 66MHz, although this depends on the CPU. As you know from the overclocking article, the clock speed of the CPU is a combination of bus speed and the multiplier — a P120 for example uses a 60MHz bus, while a P133 uses 66MHz. Both, of course, use a multiplier of 2.

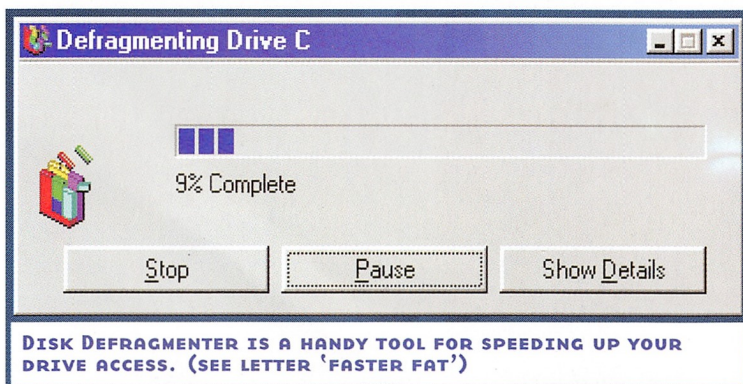
The PCI bus speed is always a division of the system bus, and although the PCI specification was originally designed with 66MHz in mind, all PCI implementations to this day try to run at 33MHz, typically half the system bus speed.

However as CPUs get faster and faster, the standard 66MHz system bus is quickly failing to provide the required clock speeds. Higher bus speeds (such as 75MHz, 83MHz and 100MHz) appeared primarily to allow higher CPU frequencies, although there are other benefits as well. So why haven't higher bus speeds appeared earlier? One reason has been system RAM — until EDO and then SDRAM appeared anything faster than 75MHz would often cause instability problems since traditional RAM couldn't handle the speed. Which, incidentally, is why the PCI bus is normally a division of 2 from the system bus — most PCI devices today don't handle anything higher than 33MHz very well.

So, back to your question — what does happen on a 100MHz system? A division of 2 gives us 50MHz, far exceeding the 33MHz most PCI devices are happy with. So what happens when you divide 100 by 3? You get 33.3MHz — spot on.

Now for the cool part. Most BX motherboards also support 103, 112 and 133MHz bus speeds. Using 112MHz the PCI bus runs at 37.3MHz, giving all your PCI devices a slight performance boost but not increasing the PCI bus speed so much that they refuse to work. Most PCI devices will only handle a frequency change of a few MHz, which is why most people can't use the new 133MHz bus speed — not only do you need very fast SDRAM to handle it (known as CAS-2 SDRAM), but you need PCI devices that don't mind running at 44.3MHz. So far, almost all PCI devices will malfunction at this speed and so it's not actually possible to use 133MHz — unless you use a special motherboard. The ASUS range of BX motherboards, for example, have gone the next step — how do you lower the PCI bus on a 133MHz system bus? Divide by 4. This gives 33.25, returning the PCI bus back to its normal state, yet allowing you to achieve very high CPU speeds with standard multipliers.

So why would you want to use a faster bus? Apart from increasing the speed at which your CPU operates and boosting PCI devices, you also increase the speed at which the CPU can access main memory. For a 100MHz based system, the CPU can transfer well over 1G of information a second, which means that it can access any part of your RAM extremely fast — normally around 8ns. This makes your system more responsive, whether you're working or playing games.



He was saying that Windows 95 took up '10 megs' while Windows 98 takes up '100 megs'. He was trying to convince the guy that it wasn't worth upgrading. I have Windows 95 and I'm sure it takes up more than 10 megs. Was this guy talking through his arse? Is Windows 98 that much bigger than Windows 95? I was thinking of upgrading but I don't have that much space left on my computer.

David
Sutherland NSW

A Yes, that sales-lifeform certainly wasn't talking through his mouth. Windows 95 takes up a heck of a lot more than 10 megs as I'm sure you're aware, but it's true that Windows 98 takes up a heck of a lot more than that. Depending on the options you select to install, Windows 98 can take up anywhere from 165M to 355M. Using the newer FAT32 file system will allow for better space utilisation and reduce this maximum to around 255M, but that's still at least 120M larger than Windows 95. If you can afford the space (and the money) it's worth upgrading, but it's no big deal if you can't.

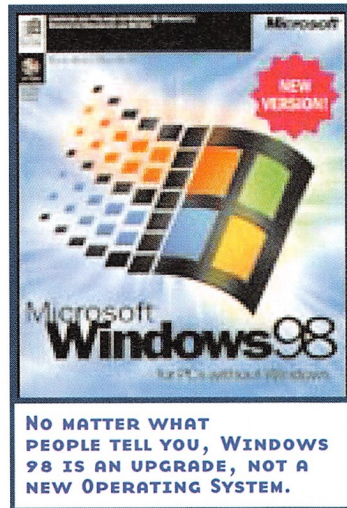
BETTER NETWORKING

Q We currently have a 2 Pentium, Windows 95 network used for gaming and file + printer sharing. We are planning on adding another computer. What would be the best way to hook the 3 computers up? (The computers are in different rooms)

OPTION 1: Set 1 computer up as a server and hook the other 2 up to that one.

OPTION 2: Have all the computers hooked up to both of the other 2.

OPTION 3: Hook them up in a line.
Are there any good pro-

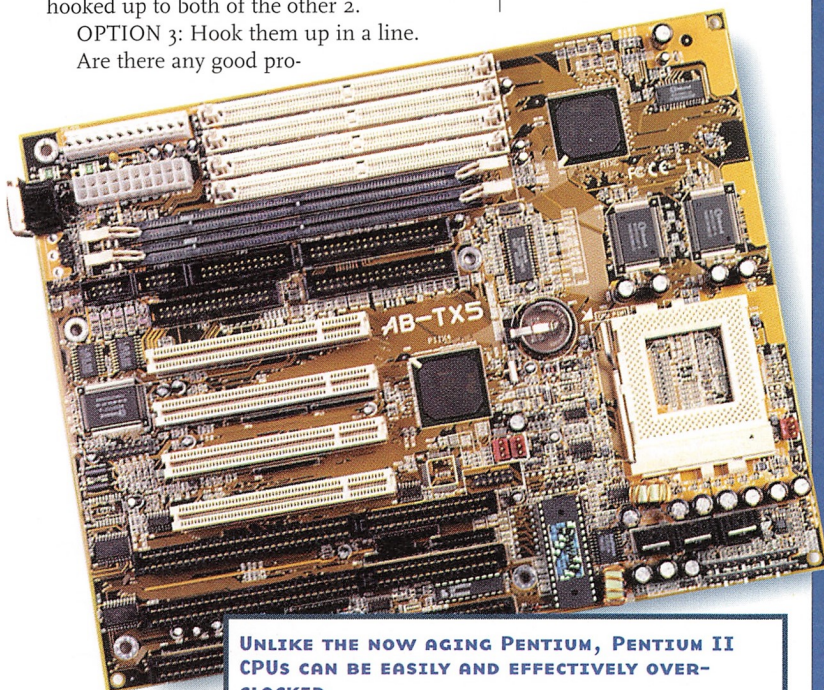


grams for Internet sharing over the network that won't slow down gameplay too much?

Benjamin Gilmore
Internet

A For just 3 PCs stick with your average NE2000 compatible network card using a BNC connector and coax cable. Just hook the machines up in line, terminating the 2 PCs on each end. Everything will work like a charm.

As for sharing and playing over the Internet, this has been discussed previously - just download and configure WinGate. It can be a little tricky to use, but it works well when it's setup properly. Take note though, that playing over a modem (even 56k) is going to get slow for any more than 2 PCs, although it depends on how demanding the game is.



UNLIKE THE NOW AGING PENTIUM, PENTIUM II CPUs CAN BE EASILY AND EFFECTIVELY OVERCLOCKED.

Tech Tips

Personalise your PC with quick & easy tweaking tips

MY SOURCE OF JOY

Being the gamer that I am, I thought I'd share with you the specs of my new baby, recently purchased and built to provide endless hours of awesome gaming. Some of you may remember my painted black PC case — spoken about in tones of reverence or claims of insanity, depending on who at PCPP you talked to. Well, the black case is no more, but I now present to you my new source of gaming joy!

The BEAST:

- Pentium II 400 overclocked to 448MHz.
- ASUS P2B motherboard, running at 112MHz bus.
- 128M of CAS-2 SDRAM, purchased from the USA.
- 8M Matrox Millenium
- 24M Quantum ObsidianII X-24 single card dual Voodoo 2
- 8M Gravis Ultrasound PnP Pro sound card
- Adaptec 2940UW SCSI controller (transferred from old PC with drives)
- 2 * 4.5G IBM DCHSo4U UltraWide 7200rpm SCSI drives
- Iomega Jaz drive
- 17" Sony monitor (upgrading to 19" soon)
- US Robotics Courier 56k modem
- A new ATX case! No, I haven't painted it, and probably never will.

Runs: Windows 98, Linux.

Cool things:

- Shutting down from Windows automatically turns the PC off.
- Pressing the spacebar turns the PC on. Very cool.
- CPU uses specialised dual-fan heatsink, purchased from the USA.
- ASUS motherboard monitors CPU and motherboard temperature, as well as the RPMs of the case and CPU heatsink fans!
- Hooked up the case LEDs so there's one LED per drive, plus the power LED.
- My case isn't black. Were there black cases, I'd buy one. Getting a black case in Australia is like trying to buy good Aussie beer in the US. I don't think I'll paint this one. PCs are better played, not painted.

This is my Ultimate Gaming System for the Ultimate Gaming Experience. At least for the time being. If you want to share your precious PC with other readers, or you're proud of various tweaks and manual additions you may have carried out, send in your comments and tell us all about it. If they're weird enough, or impressive enough, we'll print them here!

AND NOW A HANDY TIP SUBMITTED BY 'RYURYAN':

If you are having modem troubles and have phone extensions, try unplugging them before logging on the Internet to see if the other phone extensions are causing distortion on the line. If this is your problem you will rejoice with much longer and more stable Internet gaming (and browsing).

Don't forget to send in your favourite Tech Tip, the fame and glory of getting your name in the best gaming mag in the world awaits!

Bleeding edge games and 3D technology

SECOND GEN VOODOO2

Microsoft upgrade their 3D engine, plus cutting edge graphics news and a swag of new cards tested.

BENCHTEST

Intel Express 3D Graphics card

Previously we had a chance to look at the Intel Express 3D featuring the i740 chipset. This month we're revisiting the i740, this time with a complete Powerbench P2 (AGP) score.

In case you were wondering if AGP is a powerful bus, then let the 2D score do all the talking. 99.2468 is something to get very excited about. The closest any PCI card has come to that kind of a 2D score is 55.6833 with the V2200. AGP in this situation has effectively doubled 2D output and the i740 is considerably cheaper than current V2200 solutions.

In terms of 3D, what's extremely interesting from the P2 tests is that the i740 reaches its full potential on a P2 350. Polygon throughput elements of the Powerbench benchmarking suite shows that the i740 reached its maximum where the Voodoo 2 was able to have more polygons pumped through it.

The actual percentage difference between the sub scores was exactly 15%. 15% of 350 is 52.5 so we can pretty much assume that the i740 was designed for a P2 300.

This is actually good news for those that are upgrading to a P2 300. Firstly, there's no need to be concerned about processor limitation, you've reached the card's maximum. Secondly, the price point of the i740 makes it an excellent solution until the next purchase of that Gigahertz chip, especially with the 2D scores it's achieving.

Metabyte Wicked 3D

Not to steal any thunder from the well received Metabyte Wicked 3D, but the difference



Is this the beginning of the end for the dominance of 3Dfx cards? Has someone found a better way?

between a DirectX 5.2 and DirectX 6 benchmark is painful. That's actually an 8% decrease in the score. It's hard to say whether it's worth getting concerned yet, but see the DirectX 6 topic in this article for a possible explanation.

Back to the topic at hand and the release of Metabyte's Wicked 3D is one that has caused quite a stir in the gaming community. Mainly for its much publicised increase in speed. The catch, however, is

DirectX 6 released

Excited? There may be a need to check that jubilation, soldier. The battle isn't over yet. DirectX 6 is potentially about to become another in the long list of disappointing software releases, if for no other reason then because benchmarks are slower through DirectX 6. By how much? Up to an 8% decrease in performance.

What we're seeing may actually be a good thing. What results in a performance decrease in one area may equal a performance increase in another. An example of this might be in memory or disk management, two areas that benchmarks won't pick up on, because they will only become evident in complex environments (such as Unreal). (Except for Ziff Davis's Winbench 3D, an excellent, but extremely unwieldy 3D benchtest).

Of course, it could just be a case of too much new (or unnecessary) crap being thrown into DirectX 6, bogging it down. We may see these issues magically addressed in DirectX 6.0a, but for the moment, whether it's faster or not isn't to be proven in DirectX's

own benchmarking utilities.

On the plus side though is AGP support. There's a certain level of excitement gleaned from looking at your total available video memory and seeing 38Mb free.

Direct3D, DirectDraw and DirectPlay are upgraded to version 6, however DirectInput and DirectSound remain at version 5. We'll be watching carefully for software that's released with DirectX 6 support and report on its successes and failures.

DX6 Newsflash

This just in from Eric Johnson of 3Dfx in reference to poor performance with DirectX6:

"We should have optimised DX6 drivers for the Voodoo2 around the beginning of October. Most games currently available don't take advantage of the new features in DX6. We expect to see the first titles that really use DX6 features to ship in time for Christmas, and we'll have you covered by then".

Ah hah! The mystery might well be solved.

BENCHTEST: INTEL EXPRESS 3D CARD

Chipset: Intel i740

Features: Specular highlighting, edge anti-aliasing, Intel's proprietary pixel interpolation (for sharper images), DVD playback at 24 fps, direct Memory execution (allowing for 16Mb of graphics textures to be stored in system memory) and Full AGP 2X support.

Powerbench P2 2D (DirectX 5.2): 99.2468

Powerbench P2 3D (DirectX 5.2): 78.779

Powerbench P2 AGP: 89.0129

Powerbench P2 2D (DirectX 6): 99.2468

Powerbench P2 3D (DirectX 6): 76.0244

Powerbench P2 AGP: 87.6356

BENCHTEST: METABYTE WICKED 3D CANOPUS PURE 3D 2

Chipset: 3Dfx Voodoo 2

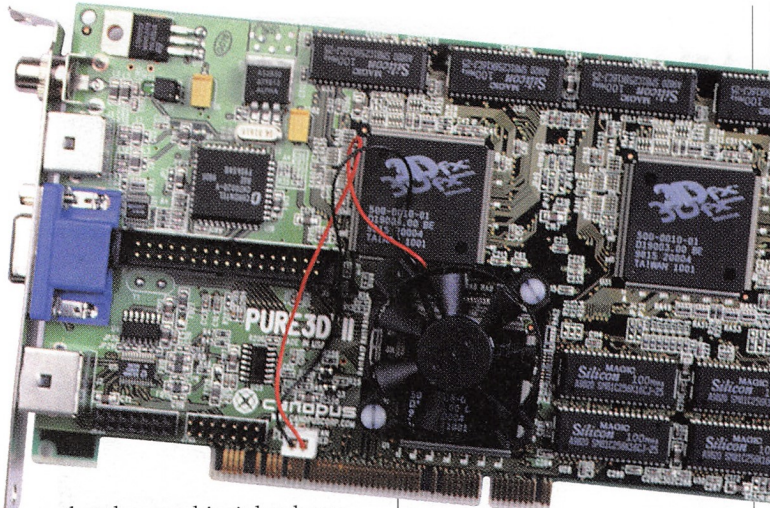
Metabyte

Powerbench 3Dfx P2 (DirectX 5.2): 145.166

Powerbench 3Dfx P2 (DirectX 6): 134.892

Canopus

Powerbench P2 3Dfx (DirectX 6): 142.896



that the speed isn't hardware based, it's purely software.

It seems that Metabyte's claim to fame is their experience in developing high performance drivers for over 30 graphics architectures on the PC. They also claim particular intricate knowledge of OpenGL, DirectX, and the Windows Driver Model (WDM).

The Wicked 3D, as defined by Metabyte, is targeted purely to the hardcore gamer. So much so that driver performance is what the premium price of the Wicked 3D V2 is all about. In fact, there isn't even a standard game bundle included with the card.

According to the blurb, Metabyte employs over 100 software engineers whose specific role is taking other companies' software drivers/programs, and reengineering them towards higher performance along with creating their own specialized software.

In the case of the Voodoo 2, their magic is in the form of the "Enhanced Transformation and Lighting Engine". The "TNL Engine" is a Metabyte developed software enhancement that allows the Wicked3D V2 card to streamline the 3D pipeline routines of DirectX, and they claim to offer up to 40% faster performance in the applications that utilize it.

Did you spot the catch phrase there? The TNL engine is only going to increase performance for applications that support it. Currently, only the Winbench 98 benchmark supports the TNL Engine's features. Admittedly, according to Metabytes' own publicised benchmarks, the performance difference between the Wicked3D V2 card and other competitor's V2 cards is quite astonishing. It's yet to be seen though if any developers are opting to pick up the TNL ball and run with it.

(above)

The Canopus Pure 3D 2 - one of the only cards on the market to offer a cooling fan as an option with their cards. Canopus are also one of the only manufacturers to have fiddled with the reference design from 3Dfx - resulting in a worryingly large custom SLI cable shipping with the product

Canopus Pure 3D 2

There's no doubt that the Canopus Pure 3D 2 is an impressive looking card. Chips on both sides of the card and a thunderous cooling fan attached to the main 3D processor. It looks great, so it's a shame then that its driver support is so terribly bad.

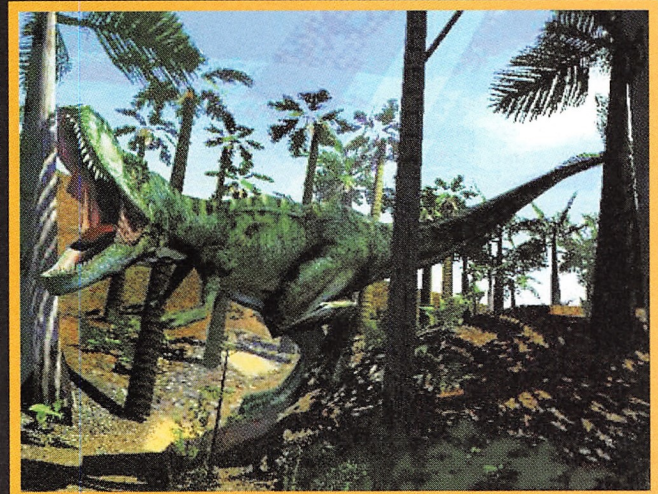
Running Windows 98 and installing the Canopus driver from the silver CD right out of the box resulted in nothing but a system crash. Deleting and reinstalling Windows 98 didn't help one iota either. The only solution, which is unacceptable if you're Internet impaired, was to go to the Canopus web site and download the latest drivers.

From a hardware point of view, the Canopus is premium, the cooling fan in particular means you can run the card at 100Mhz without a problem. In fact, you will note that the score under DirectX 6 places the Pure 3D 2 as the clear Voodoo 2 leader, and unlike the Wicked 3D, doesn't require software to be specially written to address it. In fact, adding the 8% discrepancy between DX5.2 and DX6 you end up with a score around 154.3276, a substantial lead over everyone else.

The inconvenience of having to download drivers off the net, especially if not forewarned, is a big negative in an otherwise extremely gameworthy card.

SPECULAR SPOTLIGHT

Trespasser



Humans are very difficult things to render. Even more difficult however are complex biological entities such as horses or dogs. Trespasser then, looks to be quite exciting on the 3D front because it will feature real time Dinosaurs in the environment. These screen shots show early renderings (there's no bilinear support yet) but the dinosaurs look absolutely amazing and show obvious skill on the part of the 3D artist. Note the bump mapped skin on the incredibly detailed T-Rex - possible Voodoo 2 extensions in this one.



Quick Bytes

VOODOO 2 REVISION 3

3Dfx has announced the newest revision of their Voodoo2 reference design, "Revision 3". The boards we all know and love we're assuming are revision 2, and revision 1 was probably the beta.

Anyway, the only real advantage is better (faster) RAM, which will allow Voodoo2 boards to be safely overclocked to 100MHz with no additional cooling. The revised board ultimately offers an overall performance boost of around 15 percent. So far none of the companies making Voodoo 2 boards have adopted the new design revision yet.

MYTH 2

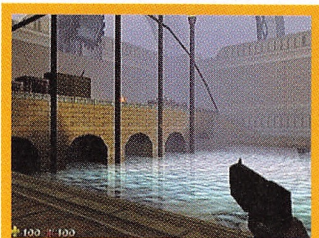
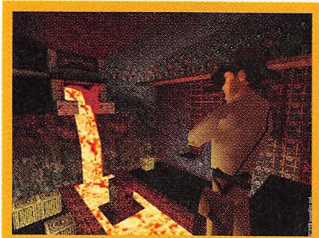
Myth 2 is well under way and the screenshots are looking extremely impressive. Of most interesting note is the clarity and crisp colours employed in Myth 2.

STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON

Lucasarts, although usually deserving of heavy praise, have had their fair share of disastrous titles. Anyone remember Rebel Assault? Likewise with X-Wing, and X-Wing vs TIE fighter, well respected games, but many a frustrated gamer called it quits from it all being just a little too hard. TIE Fighter had the best game balance overall and we're hoping that Rogue Squadron will rekindle past balanced glory. The screenshots at least look rather tasty though at quite a low res in these early stages.

DUNGEON KEEPER 2

Dungeon Keeper, the game that took vapourware to new heights is set for part 2. DK2 will feature some much needed improved combat and DirectX support. On a 3Dfx the game looks infinitely better with multiple coloured light sources, bilinear filtering and a cleaner graduation of colours. The old sprite based monsters have even been replaced with polygonal ones. Although fairly simple objects, a crowded



(top to bottom) Dungeon Keeper 2, Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine, Turok 2 (below) Myth 2

dungeon could become quite an intensive experience if Bullfrog don't get their optimizations right.

INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

We've mentioned this one before here at PowerPlay but IJAIM looks to be creating some very nice internal environments with a good (not excellent) rendering of the Indy character in 3D. Outside environments in contrast however look terrible. Sadly it's unlikely that Lucasarts are going to license the Unreal engine for Indy, so graphically this could turn out to be a rather bland affair.

TUROK 2

The sequel to the quite visually appealing Turok is looking awesome. Acclaim are certainly doing an Activision (from 2 years back). Redeeming themselves after a spate of terrible releases, Forsaken hit the spot in terms of playability and definitely in eye-candy. Looking at Turok 2 the same level of quality in Forsaken is being transferred over. The translucent and fogging effects in particular look excellent.

Jere Lawrence

Powerbench v2.0

Back on September 17 1997, after 2 weeks of hard work, our very own scoring and benchmarking system named Powerbench came to be. Now, 11 months later, the inevitable has happened. With the influx of AGP cards and processor limited 3D accelerators, Powerbench has taken the big step into the world of the P2.

The new platform

A benchmarking machine has to be many things. Primarily, it has to be progressive. The aim is for a machine to be current, or a little on the low side in a years time. For that reason, a P2 350/64Mb RAM has been chosen as the new system to take Powerbench into 1999. The Powerbench software hasn't changed in any way, just the hardware. Obviously scores on different processors can't be compared so as to differentiate, new scores will be known as Powerbench P2. So as to say goodbye as we shed a tear, here is a table of all the cards we've tested on the original Powerbench system.

Overall Powerbench

Name	2D	3D	Overall
Canopus Total 3D 128V	55.6833	79.5231	67.6032
Diamond Viper V330	55.6833	74.2239	64.9536
Hercules Thriller 3D	53.12	58.9866	56.0533
Videologic Apocalypse 5D	52.0645	57.7751	54.9197
The Apocalypse 5D Sonic	52.0645	57.7751	54.9197
Diamond Fire GL 1000 Pro	43.4306	63.5259	53.4783
Diamond Stealth II S220	52.4086	54.4853	53.446
Hercules Dynamite Stingray 128/3D	48.5897	48.1613	48.3755
Matrox Mystique	53.6054	33.28	43.4427
Hercules 3D/DX	51.3961	20.2943	35.8452
Grafstar 6000	47.2321	21.2897	34.2609
Cardex GX	45.8642	20.4384	33.1513
Hercules Dynamite 128	49.9172	15.5209	32.7191
Legend 128T6	47.8024	17.5565	32.6794
Grafstar 750	44.3279	20.0901	32.2315
Hercules 64	46.7533	15.0353	30.8943
Diamond Stealth 3D 3000	43.5765	17.9843	30.7804
Genoa	46.3535	13.7935	30.7350
Hercules S3 Virge	43.1764	14.5626	28.8695
Hercules Terminator 64	41.7440	14.8380	28.2910
#9 gFx Reality	41.5324	14.4040	27.9682
3D Blaster	32.5585	24.3582	28.4584
Canopus Total 3D	30.3089	23.1071	26.0708

Powerbench 3D

Name	3D
Matrox M3D	58.2934
Videologic PowerVR2	57.7751
Videologic PowerVR	49.9404

3Dfx Powerbench

3Dfx	Score
2 Voodoo 2s in SLI.	167.902
Diamond Monster 2	124.848
Creative Voodoo 2	123.723
Orchid Righteous 3D II	122.121
Obsidian 100SB-4440 & 100SB-4400	117.594
Canopus Pure 3D	57.2331
Obsidian 50SB-4440	53.4802
Orchid	53.0548
Dragon	52.0247
Diamond	52.0124
Legend	50.4953
Flash	49.4656
Maxi	49.1931

PC PowerPlay HOT HARDWARE

What the hell is MULTIMEDIA anyway?

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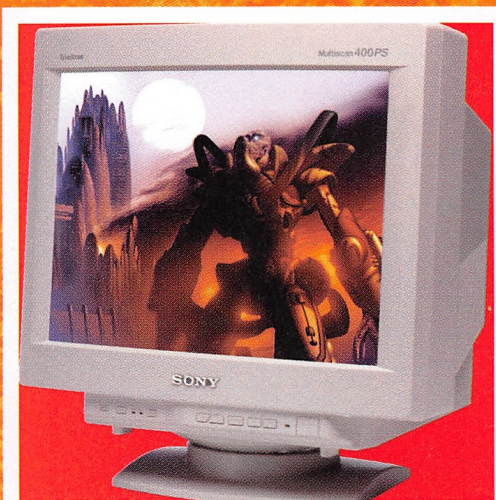
Like a custom-built street rod, today's gaming PC is a lovingly crafted collection of state of the art technologies.

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Net Game News

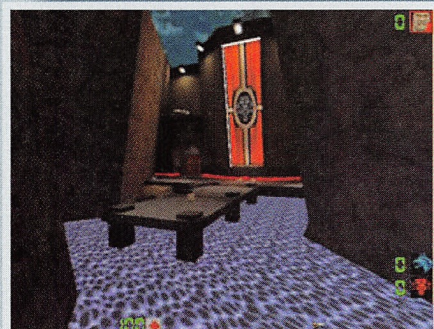
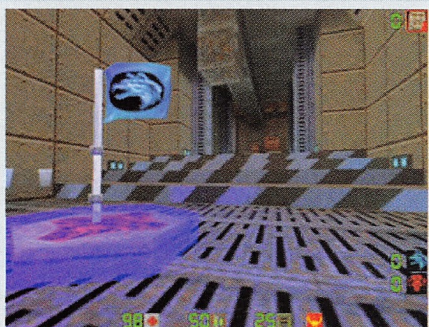
Polvo's adventures in cyberspace

It's time for all those first person gaming freaks to end the mourning over Unreal's lack of decent multiplayer support and look elsewhere for kicks. Notice the quiet? It's the calm before the storm.

It's been a good 9 months since the release of perennial favourite Quake II and we're about to be hit by an onslaught of mods and conversions that'll satisfy that itchy trigger finger of yours. While we've seen a few good major add-ons already, most of the other major ones that have remained in development limbo are nearing completion. Quake II fans looking for something will be being well looked after over the next 12 months or so. Look for a NGN special on the Quake II Mod and Total Conversion wave in the near future.

Multiplay/TEN

It's been full steam ahead as usual at Multiplay. There should be a patch out by the time you read this that'll allow support for stacks of new games. CTF2 for Quake2, Warheads, ARC, Warcraft, Masters of Orion2 and Dark Sun Online will be playable on Multiplay sometime late August or early September. There's also a survey up at <http://springs.multiplay.com.au/survey/survey.pl> which we urge you to visit (no, we're not on the Multiplay payroll) as the MP people actually listen to what we gamers want and work hard at improving the service. It only takes a few minutes and could mean that the next MP patch could include the game YOU want supported. MG Rossie's Events Calendar (<http://www.multiplay.com.au/ross/events.html>) is the place to go if you're new to the service



Loki's Minions- a Capture The Flag deathmatch mod for Quake 2

Gren's Area!

Contact S.A.S

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Unctf
Links/Downloads
Help!
How to bind + Save

#1 ThreeWave CTF:-

Stage1: The Start
Stage2: Techs
Stage3: Bindings
Stage4: Team Play
Stage5: Points
Stage6: Conclusion

#2 ThreeWave CTF:-

Stage1: The Update
Stage2: The Admin
Stage3: S.A.S's

S.A.S'S GUIDE TO CTF

This guide is for anyone whos never heard of ctf, or has, but wishes to learn more. Many of you may have already seen my CTF guide, but recently I've felt theres a need to updated it. This has lead to a second part to my original CTF guide + some other bits and pieces.

Saturday, August 15, 1998

I've had some feedback about my guide:

"Jeff Burkholder" = He commented on about using the blaster as a 'trick' to fool the enemy into thinking you don't have a powerful weapon....

"Ishi Carter" = He said about using the quad + machine gun, which he finds is powerful....

Jeff's comments remind me I left this out :(I have stuff on quake2 DM on my main site. On there is included about using the blaster to make the enemy think your weaponless then as they come towards you they get a rocket in the face :) e.t.c. Things like this will be added soon.

Ishi's comments relate to the techs, and quad. My 'Weapons Department' stats and comments are when your not using a tech. When a certain tech the weapons power and usefulness changes. I will be added comments about this to my weapons page. Thanks Ishi for reminding me :)



VWEP 3.15

Info/Instructions

Download

FAQ/Download/Links

Clients

Download [vwep_315.exe](#). And run it. Tell it where your Quake 2 install directory is and it'll extract automatically.

Note: This will allow you to connect to any VWep-capable server, and see the weapons that people are using. In order for VWep to work, the following things need to happen:

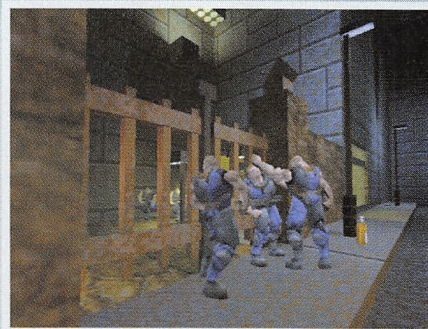
1. You need to have pak2.pak in your \quake2\baseq2\ directory, and the individual weapon files in the \quake2\baseq2\players* directories.
2. The server needs to be running Quake2 v3.15.

and want to join in on some quality online gaming with stacks of people. There are competition nights for Quake, Quake II, Duke Nukem 3D, C&C: Red Alert and Total Annihilation. Often there are some cool prizes given away at the end of the night too, which has the pleasing effect of raising the level of competitiveness. Finally, for all you sceptics out there that don't believe in paying for what should be for free, Multiplay have launched a free version of their service to play around with. Free MP currently supports Quake (full version), Duke Nukem 3D (shareware), Shadow Warrior (shareware), and Diablo and Starcraft on the Multiplay battle.net host server. Go to <http://www.multiplay.com.au/joinus/> for more details.

Wireplay

Wireplay have also been business as usual, with a new version of the GameWorld dialler posted (<http://www.wireplay.com.au/games/downloads.shtml>). This is necessary to dial into the Quake and Quake II servers.

The Competitions page has been fairly light and empty lately, with nothing new on the horizon either. That's okay though, because the absolutely HUGE "Wireplay Invades Brisbane" competition (http://www.wireplay.com.au/comps/wp_brisbane_comp.shtml) is currently under way.



Conquest is similar to Team fortress, with specific objectives and different character classes

Talk about doing it in style. Made up of three rounds, finalists battle it out in a best of three series of Quake II towards sometime mid September for a jaw-dropping prize pool. First prize is a Pentium II 300 computer (as well as a trophy, free WP time and a swanky denim shirt). Second is a large screen TV and

TOP MULTIPLAYER GAMES THIS MONTH:

1. Quake II
2. Starcraft
3. Ultima Online
4. Descent II
5. Myth

The address to vote, once again, is ngrn@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

JIVE TALK

Mod. - Short for modification. A mod is a file or program that modifies a program in any way. These are usually minor in size.

An example of this is the VWep mod for Quake II, which allows players to see what weapon their opponents are holding.

TC. - Total Conversion. A TC is a larger scale mod. Rather than small enhancements, a TC (as the name suggests) can completely change the original game. An example of this is Quake Rally for Quake. Once downloaded and installed, players could race vehicles around tracks using the Quake engine.

bean bag, third is a Diamond Monster 3D Voodoo II 12MB video card, fourth is a stereo system and lava lamp, fifth is a year's supply of Jolt cola, sixth is a year's supply of pizza. ALRIGHT! Are they not some of the coolest prizes ever seen? Well, it's too late for newcomers to the Wireplay scene to join in the competition. For those that missed out - get practicing for the next one now!

Wireplay also have an online event calendar that points when the best time is to play your favourite online game. While a game of Quake II is almost always guaranteed any day of the week, you may have a spot of trouble looking for opponents in a game of Jedi Knight for example. Wireplay have decided to highlight two popular online games a night for every day of the week, with most popular titles covered. Just show up on the specific night and play. Go to <http://www.wireplay.com.au/underworld/calendar.shtml> if you can't find someone to play with.

Readers Write

Of all the letters we get each month here at PC PowerPlay, we are asked two particularly common questions in relation to online gaming. Firstly, we get the "I just bought Quake II, played multiplayer, and after a half hour of mindless fragging other players to bits, found it to be extremely boring. Is this what online gaming is all about?" question. The other is the "How come Quake and Quake II multiplayer gets a heck of a lot more coverage than other mp games?" one

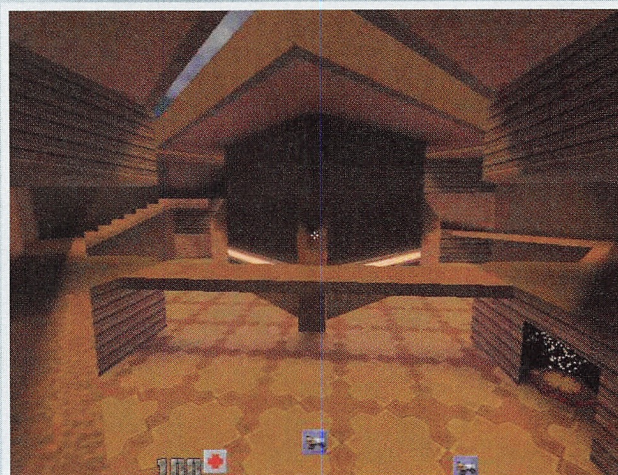
While both questions seem quite separate, the answers are closely related. Most multiplayer games offer an experience similar to the single player one but with human controlled opponents instead of the program's AI. Simple but fun. Players quickly discovered simply blasting your opponents to bits became dull rather quickly. Variety was needed. As a result, game developers started releasing different



Holy Quake- grab the halo and go on a killing spree



(above & left) Rocket Arena 2 is one of the most popular Quake 2 deathmatch mods available. It pits fully-armed and armoured players against each other one on one, or in teamplay



game to play for an unheard length of time (and people still continue to play it, regularly). Perhaps the most popular mod/TC was Capture The Flag. Working on the co-op principle, CTF featured two teams, each with a base of operations. The aim of the game was to find the flag and bring it back to home

base. A totally new strategy was needed to survive and succeed in this game. You needed base defence, offensive soldiers, and regular scouts to patrol in between. CTF was frantic, stimulating, and called on real team work.

That's just one of scores of mods and TC's developed for Quake and Quake II. Each offers a different take on the original game, and most succeed in pushing the envelope of multiplayer gaming.

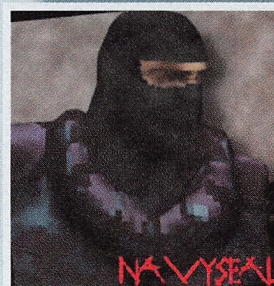
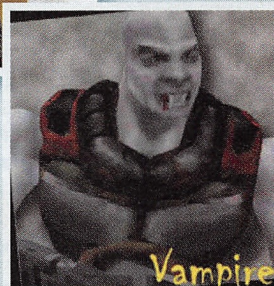
The answer to question number two builds on the above. The reason Quake and Quake II gets more coverage is simply because of the way in which gamers embraced these titles. No other game has been mutated in so many ways as Quake has. There's so much out there, you could almost devote half this magazine to covering the developments within the Quake scene. So if you're sick of hearing the word Quake - bad luck. You'll be hearing a lot more of it in the future.



(above) South Park Quake - Mr Hanky and the bats
(right) Cry Havoc is another class based total conversion for Q2

multiplayer versions of their games, with things like co-operative play built in. In co-op players joined together to battle the enemy, so a more social aspect to blasting things was introduced. This too however suffered in popularity as the basic gameplay hadn't evolved that much. Rather that "kill the enemy", it simply became "kill the enemy, with friends".

When inventive coders came up with ways to enhance the online experience, Quake remained the



WEBSTALK

WWW - The Weird & Wonderful Web.

Do you consider yourself normal? If so, don't go anywhere near these websites. That's right, it's "Tripped Out Websites Month". Some people who have too much time on their hands watch Television, other do crosswords, but it's an even more special breed which make sites like this.

THE BORED HEAVY WEAPONS GUY:

<http://groundzero.blaze.net.au/expunged/BoredHWGUY/index.htm>

The sub title says it all: "I've always wanted to be normal but lately I've come to suspect that this is it." The basic idea behind this site is to look inside the life and crimes of a Heavy Weapon's Guy from Team Fortress when he's not doing the business capturing flags. Complete with pub stories and some "interesting" Team Fortress Screen adaptations. The actual usefulness of this site is in serious question, but who really cares? And you know exactly what you're in for when you read the very first couple of lines. 100% full of it? Yeah, but we love it.

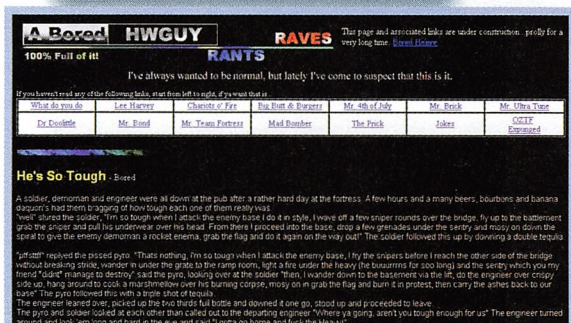
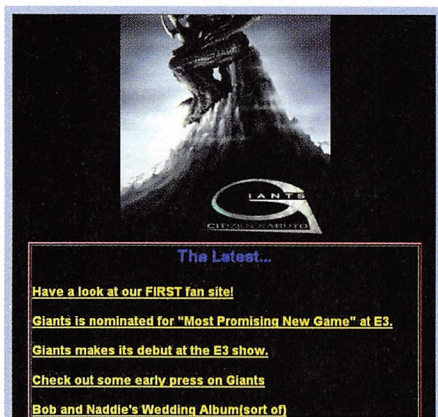
Content: ★★ ★

Site Design: ★★ ★★ ★

PLANET MOON STUDIOS

<http://www.planetmoon.com>

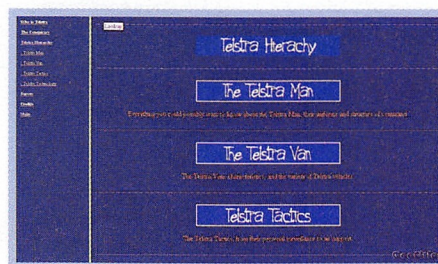
Normally you'd expect an official site to be at least somewhat serious. Not Planet Moon studios, even though they were the people



responsible for MDK, one of last years bigger games they still don't seem to give a stuff when it comes to their website, so much so that it even borders on being funny. Who would have thought someone would put wedding photos alongside new game features. Or that getting their first fan site would rate as the biggest news of the week. They even include World Cup Soccer scores as part of their latest happenings. In short, this site contains very little info on any games, is poorly presented and in generally very unprofessional for a game company, which makes it the easy pick for "Tripped Out Website of the Month".

Content: ★★ ★

Site Design: ★★ ★



THE TELSTRA CONSPIRACY

<http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Chamber/5199/main.html>

The site's main purpose is to spread meaningless propaganda about the evil beast that is Telstra, and does a mighty fine job too, and even includes real newspaper columns with "explanations" of Telstra Tactics. Of course, don't take this site seriously by any stretch of the imagination, there have been reports of some people actually giving Telstra a call and complaining about their underhanded tactics to gain global domination.

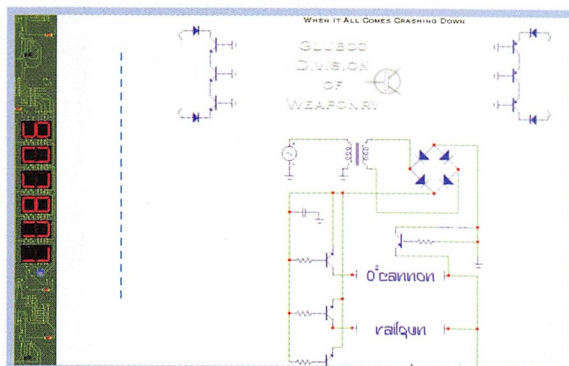
Content: ★★ ★

Site Design: ★★ ★★ ★

THE VIRTUAL FLORIST

<http://www.virtualflorist.com/>

Just to show that there is just about every sort of business on the web Virtual Florist will not let you down. Why anyone would bother is a question which defies answer, but the service is provided anyway. Virtual Florist allows you to send "virtual flowers" to someone by e-mail to tell them that you love them or some other poor excuse like that. Why you wouldn't just tell them is beyond me.



Along with the flowers, you can also send things like Bears, food and "A Nerd with Carnations" hmm, yes. The site is brilliantly designed and presented, which probably makes this site even more pointless and irrelevant.

Content: ★★ ★★ ★

Site Design: ★★ ★★ ★

GLUBCO DIVISION OF WEAPONRY

<http://www.glubco.com/weaponry/>

Ever wondered exactly how to build a 1.5 Million Volt Tesla Coil like the ones they have in Red Alert? Or even a Railgun like the ones found in Quake 2? Well here we have step by step instructions to do just that. This site doesn't actually teach you how to make Nunchakus or anything like that, but goes straight to the heavy artillery. Friends annoying you? Whip out the trusty Death Ray and see what they have to say. The pictures are actually pretty fantastic and the site is presented beautifully with a real techy feel. Even so this site has no relevance to anything which could be considered reality, this of course is what makes it so good.

Content: ★★ ★★ ★

Site Design: ★★ ★★ ★

Rod Spoonman Campbell

And try <http://users.hunterlink.net.au/~djrjc> for another pointless site. Keep on sending those sites to spoonman@hunterlink.net.au





Back Issues

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#10 New Star Wars games, 3D accelerators compared, DIY Upgrade guide, Discworld 2

#11 Diablo, Interstate '76, MMX Pentiums examined, Build your own PC and network, Dark Reign.

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#13 Need for Speed II, X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter, Quake addons, PCs versus Consoles debate, Online game hackers.

#14 Dark Reign, Doom Clones, 16 Modems tested, Derek Smart, Comanche 3, Redneck Rampage.

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#26 Unreal, Modems benchmark, Starcraft strategy guide, PCI sound cards, DIY Web Page, Might & Magic VI, Player Killers

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PC PowerPlay

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WIN A 32 BIT PCI SOUND CARD!

The InnoVision Letter of the Month wins the new LEAF 32 bit/3D sound card, using the Maestro ESS Wavetable chipset. PCI 32 bit sound leaves old ISA Sound Blaster technology for dead, freeing your CPU for faster gameplay. Valued at \$199, ph InnoVision on 03 58318833 for more info, or visit www.innovision.com.au.



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Mr Clean and the UnRiven idea

Occasionally people talk about the rate at which technology is accelerating and become mesmerised (not to mention confused) by its constant state of flux. However, there IS a way we can measure how far we have come, where we are now, and how far we have to go. This occurred to me when I would put Riven on my PC to astound my friends. Apart from being completely overwhelmed by Riven's beauty one of the most frequent comments I hear is, "I can't wait until virtual reality becomes this good". By my estimation Riven is the epitome of an utterly gorgeous and totally convincing world that is completely computer-generated. Riven is also very far from being real-time. As much as Riven represents the "high water mark" for computer generated worlds our high water mark for real-time worlds is Unreal. Unfortunately even on a PII/400 with two Voodoo2 cards Unreal looks primitive in comparison.

What is brilliant about Unreal is that you can edit Unreal models in applications like 3DStudioMAX and Lightwave then bring them back in. This means that the 3D-modelled world of Riven could, essentially, be converted into one of the most spectacular Unreal Total Conversions this planet has ever seen. Sure it would play like a dog, it probably would have a

refresh rate of say, 1 frame per hour (not good for walking around let alone interactions over the net (you wouldn't want to bring guns into Riven)). But whether Cyan (the people who created Riven) would be into it or not, I think that a game as monumental as the Riven TC could be used as the Holy Grail for technology. With a Gaming Holy Grail, technology could have something to aspire to, like the trophy at the end of a race (or an oasis at the end of a desert).

This is not to dismiss where we have come from of course. If our Holy Grail is an Unreal-Riven TC (Unriven?) and our current high water mark is Unreal, when we consider that our birthplace was Pong then it helps to see things a little more clearly.

Mat Brady, Internet

Thanks Mat, it's good to know we can count on you for regular, quality correspondence. Mat was one of the original Freak of the Month victims. He's the cleanest bloke in the world too. Hey readers, by the way, in case you were wondering what happened to Freak of the Month, it died because nobody sent in any entries! We'll happily resurrect it, just come out of the closet and celebrate your freakiness with the world!

Satanic visitations

I'd like to ask a 'game production' question. Forsaken - nice looking re-vamp of Descent but if it's supposed to be Earth, why are walls of sewer systems and work tunnels textured with images of demons and pentagrams? Creative council workers? Death risking graffiti artists? or what? I don't see the point of wall patterns like this! I don't like Diablo-looking games so I don't play 'em, simple enough! I play other games, but it seems I can't even do that without spiritual

INNOVISION LETTER OF THE MONTH

Single player, please don't go

The first topic I want to talk about is multiplayer versus single player gaming. Now I know that a lot of people like playing against others because they say it is a bigger challenge but these people who write in to you seem to be quite ignorant. Reading one of your letters in issue 27, some New Zealander stated that Command and Conquer was different and better when playing against his friend. I think he is overlooking what the single player game is all about. I understand that he likes multiplayer and I am not going to abuse him about it but when he says things like "single player missions are almost dead and there is little need to revive them" it really pisses me off.

Two years ago we were all playing by ourselves trying to conquer what the game designers came up with and now he thinks he is too good for these type of games? He doesn't understand that the whole point of the single player game is not to replace his friends but to tell a remarkable story and to totally immerse you with its fantasy world. If you want a challenge then go play soccer or footy (at least that will keep you fit), but if you want to experience something different from the every day world then the single player game is for you!

Also, I think it is easier to make multiplayer games compared to single player. Let's look at Quake 2, would you care if the levels you played in were based on a sunny day with birds flying about making wonderful sounds? No, you just want to kill the others but if you were playing the single player game you would expect the world to make sense and to fit in with the storyline. In the end the real multiplayer games that I want to play are those where you work with friends as a team to conquer someone and motor racing games. Can you imagine Australian tournaments with GP2 where only the 20 fastest people get to compete in a full-blown race with pit stops emulating real racing? I want to be involved in something like this because I will never race F1 cars in real life! Overall people should realise that not all games are suited for single player and not all are suited for multiplayer. Try playing Tomb Raider against your friends!

Nikola, Melbourne

netherworld representations spectating (see pics of walls in Volcano level. Winged, goat-legged demons and beings kneeling in pentagrams!). Now I'm sure you guys know a bit about marketing and catering for an audience, so that's why I ask - why bring that sort of stuff into a game which has nothing to do with it? For atmosphere? Surely there's better alternatives

that are less spiritually encroaching upon customers!

Oh yeah, my personal thanks for a great new menu that works nicely (sorry for bagging the other one out) and for the article on LAN parties. I'm starting out in the world of coax gaming networks so even though the article didn't tell me much more, it got me more excited about getting it working! Damn bugs!

Luke Reifler, Internet

OK, first of all, after some consultation with everyone who played Forsaken in the office we've come to the conclusion that you're seeing things. Nobody can remember seeing anything remotely satanic at all. So we think you're weird.

PK's; just like Eve

I am writing in response to the article on Online Anarchy (Issue 26). I believe that the responsibility lies wholly on the game designer/developers. I know this is quite a statement, however Eve



Letter: PK's; just like EVE, The Spirit of the Game, Killing Play



would not have eaten the apple if it was not offered. We all know that many Player Killers are young and some may even have the disorders you mentioned in your article, but, they obviously like to win at all costs and if game designers cater to this sickness then they are just encouraging these sick, twisted, underdeveloped children to continue their gruesome ways. Chances are, PK's would grow up, if games were designed to discourage this kind of play. hell, the PK's might surprise themselves and win through fair play. I believe it is up to the Game Designers to set an example, not just the parents.

I would hate to be a hypocrite and leave without offering some game designer options:

- In game Tournaments, organised by high level characters, the characters could set the Tournament parameters (eg. to the Death, or Gentleman like combat) and rewards.
- Enforced Laws and compensation for victims.
- Imprisonment, which would mean loss of assets and items (not skills).
- In game policing and safe areas for personal development. As well as the option of safe passage to other areas.
- And, as the King of Siam said frequently, "etc, etc, etc".

Incidentally, the above ideas are some of the game options I will be incorporating in an Epic RPG I am currently designing. Just thought I

would mention that.

David Ramsey, Internet

Some interesting ideas David, but just because you're able to do something doesn't necessarily mean that you should do it, right? No matter what developers do there will always be ways to play 'outside the spirit of the game', but hopefully as the realisation seeps in that those that cheat or circumvent the rules are losers and fools this will happen less often in multiplayer games.

The Spirit of the Game

I've yet to play Ultima Online as I do not have access to the net. I have followed the progress and read the articles on UO never the less. I am very interested in the concept of UO and am eager to join the fray.

I have played the Role playing games like AD&D (Advanced Dungeons and Dragons), Shadowrun, Rift, Hero's Unlimited and a few others. And we faced some of the same problems that Net players are having. People who just don't care about the game and its atmosphere, but would rather just have the biggest army or the strongest weapon. It's these people that ruin the fun and effect for the others playing. That's right, when you play a multi-player game you really are playing with other people. Sure it's good to win, but what's more rewarding; a hard

earned victory against a competitive opponent or to find the weakest little wood cutter and smash him/her up only to find he has nothing of value because you haven't let them have a chance to accumulate any (I refer to "Online Anarchy" Issue 26).

I believe that these games are about Role Playing, the creation of a character and the development of this character, it shouldn't matter how powerful you are and how many newbie's you and your mate can slaughter but rather how you handle your power, but it should be done within character. A powerful character should battle powerful characters, and the weak newbie's should beat other newbie's so that one day they can battle a powerful character. Sure there are bound to be these Player Killers, but they should be given a disadvantage or two of some sort that discourages others to become one.

What do you think is more fun, to be a thief and skulk around in the shadows of a town picking pockets and breaking into people's houses; running away from the city watch; role playing real conversations in character with others on the other side of the world; maybe playing a cleric learning lost secrets and rising in power; to earn a real enemy and go to war against them; hiring an assassin or maybe some sneaky bastard to kidnap your enemies in and hold them ransom, or have

your enemy hold your kin hostage and you organise and set out to rescue him/her. Or whatever takes your fancy.

Or to be a player killer and basically ruin others fun and force them away until only the player killers are left. Now what kind of enjoyment do you get from that?

To me UO seems to be the game where anything can happen, you're only limited by your imagination. Maybe these people lacking the imagination (Player Killers) should put a little effort into playing the Game and read more of the letters that hate Player Killers. I can only hope that by the time I manage to get the Internet (and a 3D accelerator card) and enter the UO community that these Player Killers will leave their Quake "Kill 'em all" at the door.

**John Burden
Bairnsdale, VIC**

The backlash begins

Just finished reading the News column this month, and I am happy. The lads at iD have been surpassed - by Unreal, of course, and it seems that they're a bit touchy at the moment about Quake 3. Now there is no doubt that iD make quality games, but as far as I reckon, they've never been surpassed in the first-person genre. They have always kept their smug little attitude (Paul Steed interview, a few issues back, for example), and have been standing over everyone for ages.

Now Quake 3; why would they have dropped the single-player? Would it be that Unreal has equalled, or surpassed the planned single player for Quake 3? Is Unreal the Quake 3 that iD were planning, but released God knows how much earlier. Then there is the graphics, did Unreal surpass Quake 3's planned graphics? Frankly what I can see is that iD have realised that Unreal has beaten their pants off, and the thing they should focus on in Quake 3, what was a minor flaw in Unreal, is the multiplayer.

Oh well, hah hah to iD, and I hope for their sake, they keep their egos up high, and produce another stunner.

Hornet, Tasmania

Well, it's true that since the days of Doom, id have been riding high on their popularity and success in the games community, perhaps even a little too much. However, they still are creating fantastic games, and we're

Letter: Fantastic Fantasy



still in awe of how good they are at what they do best. Unreal wouldn't be here if it wasn't for id, and even with the changes proposed for Q3 we're still expecting a top notch game. As to whether the multiplayer (particularly Internet play) in Unreal is only a 'minor flaw', well, we're sure there would be many a frustrated gamer who would disagree. Vehemently. But still, Unreal is a great game, and Quake Arena will probably be great too - the end result being that we get the best of both worlds.

Now why didn't I think of that?

I read your article on LAN parties and I simply have to inform you of one of Australia's best innovations ever. The big problem with hosting a LAN party is setting the damn thing up, you need a venue, chairs, tables, servers hubs and God knows what else. However there is a great place in Western Australia called "Global Warriors" (don't be put off by the nerdy name) which solves all these hassles. Global Warriors is basically a small warehouse that has been done up nicely and specifically for network gaming. Just bring your own computer and plug it in. They have all the

chairs, tables, network cable, hubs and even 3 quality servers and an ISDN internet connection and can fit up to 60 gamers. I'm surprised someone didn't think of this earlier, it is simply an awesome place and it takes all the hard work out of a LAN party.

Go to <http://www.globalwarriors.com.au> for more info.
Nick Pelly, West Australia

We sincerely hope that you're not connected with this place, otherwise this would be like printing an ad, but it does sound like a great idea to take the pain and hassle out of LAN events. Wouldn't it be great if places like this could be found all over the country...

Fantastic Fantasy

Final Fantasy 7, how could you only give it 90%? I know you despise console conversions (and consoles for that matter) but come on, how long have you played it for? Did you actually spend the whole 50+ hours of late nights and sweaty foreheads? Did you actually play the thing through so it captures and mystifies your mind so you feel you are actually the main character? Or did you play it for the first 1-2 hours and think "oh well, this game is too hard, Ummmmmm, I suppose I will give it 90% for

the decent graphics"? I tell ya, I played it on my Playstation, yes I am a Playstation/PC owner ('suppose you'll think I'm just a stupid little Playstation player that can't play games for sh.... sorry peanuts, but anyway), and it was the best 50+ hours of my life (yes, I know I need to get out more). I, and every other Playstation owner who's played it seriously recommend you play the game until finished, and I also personally guarantee you'll think it has the best plot EVER! Don't block out the temptation all you gaming gurus. Go on, give it a go. Its worth the 50+ hours.

Andrew Noll Milton Internet

Seeing as we roped in the Editor of Hyper mag: Dan Toose, for the review, we'll let Dan respond:

Ahh, yet another reader who works the "They didn't say exactly what I would have so they mustn't have played the game enough" theory. To clear things up, I finished the game twice on PlayStation. First time through just completing the game, the second time through making sure I got all the Limit Breaks and Summon Materia to ensure I could see all the best spells and visual effects the game had to offer. I played it again on PC, and it was an identical port, with slightly better visuals.

Giving the game 90% was relative to the market. Take a look at console RPG fans, and PC RPG fans - they're completely different. Only a minority of gamers enjoy both styles of RPG. I happen to be one, and so might you be, but if you present FF7 to the average Ultima/M&M/ LOL/Wizardry fanatic, who hasn't be lured by Japanese RPGs in the past, then they're going to feel a little out of place, and they'd probably rather see another one of the PC/Western RPGs.

Personally I'm currently enjoying Might and Magic VI at least as much as I enjoyed Final Fantasy VII, simply because it's challenging. Final Fantasy VII is really quite easy.

Lastly, 90%... 95%... does it REALLY matter? We basically said, "It's great, go and buy it", which is what matters. Stressing about a few percent in a games review is an unnecessary step towards premature high blood pressure.

Dan

The demo that was released did for FFVII have some major problems with many systems (i.e. It crashed, and kept crashing). Squaresoft and Eidos have released a patch, and they're still working on fine tuning the game. If they do re-release a demo that works with no problems on a majority of systems, then we'll pop it on our cover CD again, but keep checking the Eidos site for information.

COMPETITIONS

MECH COMMANDER

The mech-sim has never been better (or harder). Our master tactician and all around battle commander MigMan even found the going tough in Microprose's latest, so this won't be a game that you finish in less than a week and throw away. Along with being a tough tactical challenge, it's also a way fun game to play, as you can find out for yourself if you answer the question below and send it in to us, thanks to the always generous folk at Microprose.

Q. Name the 'star' who featured alongside Big Bill Shatner in T.J. Hooker that's since gone on to marry a glam rock star (at least for a while), and had roles in Melrose Place.



SOUTH PARK

Yes, the wonderfully twisted world of South Park is coming soon to your PC, the Quake2 mod is in alpha release, and the Acclaim game is nearing completion too. While you wait for your opportunity to take control of Cartman and scream some obscenities, this pack of South Park gear should keep you content - we've got 5 sets of videos from the first series, courtesy of Warner Vision, as well as five cool analogue watches emblazoned with South Park characters too, from Quality Street.

Q. Who sings the South Park theme song?



SWAT 2

Bringing an unprecedented level of realism to police SWAT simulations, SWAT 2 rocks the house. And best of all you get to play as either the police SWAT officers, or the evil maniac mad bomber bad guys. So if you've got a yearning to bring the bad guys to justice, or just to wreak some havoc, then thanks to the lovely folk at Dataflow we've got six copies to give away - all you have to do is answer the question below.

Q. What does S.W.A.T. stand for?



WHERE TO SEND

Write the answer, along with your name and address on the back of an envelope.

All entries close October 23, 1998

Entries to:

PC PowerPlay,
78 Renwick st.
Redfern NSW 2016

Issue # 27 winners

"WIN A YEAR ON WIREPLAY"

Answer: ARPANet (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network)

T.Paine, East Keilor Vic

OUTWARS & MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS

Answers: Dijbouti, Kuwait, San Marino, Singapore, Sao Tome, Panama, Guatemala, Luxembourg, Andorra (and more)

P.Eko Hartanto, Greenwich NSW
M.Jennings, West Pennant Hills NSW

M.Thomas, Padbury WA
J.Fell, East Keilor Vic
L.Butler, Bugaldie NSW
L.Bennet, George Town Tas
S.Bignell, Glouster NSW
J.Foong, Karama NT
T.Kane, Newhaven Vic
J.Davis, Narara NSW

GABRIEL KNIGHT

Sins of the Fathers

New girl at Sierra, Jane Jensen, gave the 'Family Company' their first proper horror game.

Developer: Sierra

Year: 1993

**Reqs: 386DX/33,
4Mb RAM, VGA**

Sierra had been producing adventure games for years before Gabriel Knight came along.

Throughout the 1980s they dedicated themselves to perfecting the art of the sequel, thanks to the commercial success (not to mention critical praise, albeit to a lesser extent) of their Quest series' and, of course, Leisure Suit Larry. As these games grew ever more tired and stale, descending into aimless rehashes of past glories, Sierra, to their credit, began trying new ideas, and, you know, even they were bound to get it right eventually.

Storytime

Amid the only partially-realised disappointments like Manhunter and Laura Bow, thus we find Gabriel Knight. Released around 1993 and penned by (undoubtedly still) Sierra's best adventure author, Jane Jensen, Gabe is now recognised as a minor masterpiece. On the surface it may seem like so many other similar games. Like, in fact, many of its inferior Sierra contemporaries. Witness the formulaic presentation in the shape of the dull three-quarter views, the stodgily animated characters, the bland VGA backdrops, the rigid point-and-click gameplay. To the untrained eye it would be almost impossible to discern this from countless other



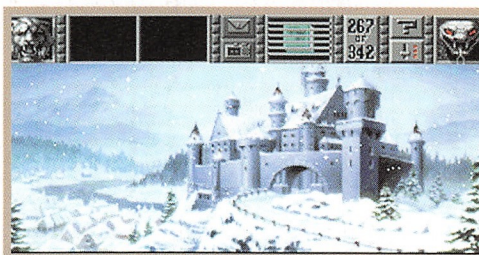
Dark & sinister undertones plus a hefty dose of black magic. And Roger Wilco is nowhere to be seen

games of around the same era. What separated Gabe from the rest was the subtlety of its story-telling and the great writing and design of Jane Jensen.

New Orleans

Here was an attention to detail we hadn't quite seen before. The ability to examine all kinds of seemingly mundane items, though hindsight would reveal them as essentially linked into the grand scheme of things, heightened the atmosphere to a great extent. Small things like the extra talk icon also made a difference - there was one for asking questions and discovering info vital to the plot, but there was also another for "small talk". Although the latter often elicited fairly trivial lines, it did succeed in fleshing out the characters and crucially made the city of New Orleans just that much more believable.

Unlike most previous adventures, Gabe was a

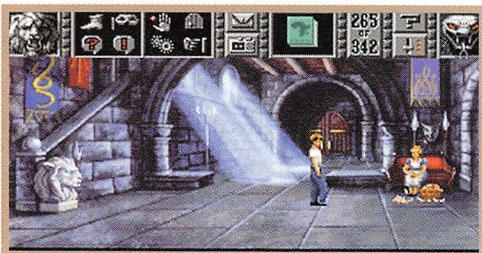


man-of-action Gabriel and his faithful, but smarter sidekick, Grace) that was later copied wholesale by Broken Sword. And The X-Files, possibly.

We smell a sequel

With Gabriel Knight 3 expected to make an appearance before the end of the year, now would be the time to track down its prequels (especially this, the original) and give yourself the opportunity to get acquainted with characters and history of what will surely be one of the best adventures in a long while. Or rather, that is, it will be if it's anywhere near as good as the first.

David Wildgoose





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